

## Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies

# Islamic Manuscripts and Books

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# Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies

*Life and Collections of  
Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905)  
in Context*

*Edited by*

Boris Liebreuz  
Christoph Rauch



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Cover illustration: *Kašf wuġūh al-ġurr li-ma‘ānī Naẓm al-durr* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāšānī, Syria 16th century. This manuscript contains on f. 1a an ownership note of Wetzstein in Arabic script. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK, Orientabteilung, Wetzstein I 38.

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## Notes on Contributors

### *Kaoukab Chebaro*

currently serves as Associate University Librarian for Archives and Special Collections at the Jafet Library, AUB, and is involved in several archiving and preservation projects. Chebaro holds a Masters in Library and Information Science (MLIS) from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Doctorate in Philosophy from Columbia University. Before joining AUB, Chebaro worked at the University Libraries of Columbia University, first as a Cataloging and Bibliographic Assistant, and then as the Middle East and Islamic Studies Librarian, before joining the AUB Libraries in 2011. She is a member of several societies, including the Middle East Librarian Association (MELA); the Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA), UK; the Lebanese Library Association; the Modern Heritage Observatory (MOHO); and the Society of Lebanese Custodians of Manuscripts. She has contributed to service on numerous Library and archival cultural heritage committees, at AUB and beyond.

### *François Déroche*

is currently Professor at the Collège de France in Paris, teaching History of the Qur'an. He is a specialist of Arabic manuscripts, with a special interest for the history of the written transmission of the Qur'an. He has been a member of the Bibliothèque nationale staff, then of the French Institute in Istanbul before joining the Ecole pratique des hautes études. He has published on codicology (with other contributors, *Islamic codicology. An introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script*, 2006) and early Qur'anic manuscripts (*La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam. Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus*, 2009; *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 2014).

### *Faustina Doufika-Aerts*

studied Arabic, Persian and Turkish Languages and Cultures at the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht. She is Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Faculty of Religion and Theology, department of Texts and Traditions at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She is involved in the study of Arabic manuscripts – in particular aspects of philology, semantics, orthography, lexicography and Middle Arabic linguistics – as the key to unlocking sources. She is a specialist in the oriental Alexander tradition. Currently, she supervises the five-year research program *Beyond the European Myth. In Search of the Afro-Asiatic Alexander Cycle and the Transnational Migration of Ideas and Concepts of Culture and Identity*. The program aims at charting, classifying, investigating, interpreting and describing

(hand)written material about Alexander the Great in Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Chagatay, Mongolian, Ethiopic, and Malay.

*Alba Fedeli*

is a research associate at the Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg, working on the transmission of early Quranic manuscripts using digital philology and phylogenetic methods. She received her PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK, after studies in Italy with Sergio Noja Nosedà. Fedeli was a research fellow at FSCIRE in Bologna, Italy, at the Centre for Religious Studies, CEU, in Budapest and at the John Rylands Research Institute in Manchester. She cooperates with the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing at the University of Birmingham. She stirred up media frenzy after the BBC announcement that the “Birmingham Quran” manuscript dates to Muhammad’s lifetime. Her publications reflect her research interests in early Quranic manuscripts. Her work on the Mingana-Lewis palimpsest has been uploaded on the Cambridge Digital Library.

*Ludmila Hanisch*

(1947–2015), PhD 1988 on the Algerian resistance movement at Freie Universität Berlin, researched extensively on the history of Oriental studies in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Among her main publications are „*Machen Sie doch unseren Islam nicht gar zu schlecht*“: *Der Briefwechsel der Islamwissenschaftler Ignaz Goldziher und Martin Hartmann 1894–1914*, Wiesbaden 2000; *Die Nachfolger der Exegeten: Deutschsprachige Erforschung des Vorderen Orients in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 2013. Her last work on the semitist Mark Lidzbarski has been published posthumously in 2017: *Aufzeichnungen von Mark Lidzbarski (1868–1928): Aus den Nachlässen der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Halle, 2015.

*Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf*

is currently research associate at the University of Tübingen in the interdisciplinary project “Settlement and Society in Premodern Oman”. From 2010 to 2014 she has been carrying out a DFG-sponsored project editing and analyzing the correspondence of the 19th-century German Orientalist Johann Gildemeister (1812–1890). For several years she has been working in the interdisciplinary project “Transformation Processes in Oasis Settlements in Oman” at the University of Tübingen where she also obtained her doctoral degree. She has frequently published on the history of Oman (*Scheich Muḥsin b. Zahrān al-ʿAbrī: Tribale Macht im Oman des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2008; *Oman and overseas*, ed. 2013); on the development of Oriental studies in Germany (*Johann G. Gilde-*

*meister: Briefe 1831–1888*, ed. 2016; *Einer der gescheidsten Männer, die ich je habe kennen lernen: Johann Gustav Gildemeister und die orientalischen Studien im 19. Jahrhundert*, 2016; „*Es war einfach nothwendig, so und nicht anders zu schreiben*“, ed. 2014) as well as on aspects of material culture.

*Ingeborg Huhn*

(Berlin), independent Orientalist, Freiburg/i.Brsg (MA), Freie Universität Berlin (PhD-thesis on Johann Gottfried Wetzstein), two years in Cairo and Damascus. She wrote numerous publications on Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, e.g. “Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein in der Handschriftenabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin” (2006), “Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)” (2016) and Huhn/Kurio (ed.): “Die ersten elf Suren des Koran: Übersetzt von Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, erster preußischer Konsul in Damaskus 1849–1861” (2015).

*Robert Irwin*

is a writer of both fiction and non-fiction. His works of non-fiction include *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (1994), *Islamic Art* (1997), *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (1999), *The Alhambra* (2004) and *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (2006). Also *Camel, Mamluks and Crusaders*, *Visions of the Jinn: Illustrators of the Arabian Nights* and the editing of and introducing *The New Cambridge History of Islam* volume 4, *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, all in 2010, and *Memoirs of a Dervish* in 2011. His *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* was published in 2018. He was formerly a lecturer in the Department of Mediaeval History in the University of St Andrews. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, of the London Institute of Pataphysics, of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the Society of Antiquaries. He is a consulting editor at the *Times Literary Supplement* and is a Senior Research Associate of the Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures Department of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University.

*Boris Liebreuz*

is a Post-Doc researcher at the Saxon Academy of Sciences and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*. Liebreuz has published widely on the history of Oriental studies, manuscript collecting, and Arabic type printing, particularly in Leipzig in the 16th through 19th century. His main interest is the history of manuscripts, libraries, and readers in the Middle East, also the topic of his Ph.D. (2013) which was published as *Die Rifāʿīya*

*aus Damaskus* (Leiden 2016). He currently explores 18th century Arabic merchant networks in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea through letters.

*Astrid Meier*

is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Martin Luther University of Halle Wittenberg. She served as Deputy Director of the Orient-Institut Beirut from 2013 to 2018. A historian by training, she holds a Ph.D. of the University of Zurich in Switzerland (1994). Her research interests include the social and cultural history of the Middle East in the early-modern period; theory and practice of Islamic law; environmental history. The focus of her current research project is on the early-modern history of rural societies in the Middle East. Recent publications: “The Materiality of Ottoman Water Administration in 18th-Century Rural Damascus. A Historian’s Perspective,” in: McPhillips, Stephen/Wordsworth, Paul (eds.): *Landscapes of the Islamic World: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, 19–33; with Tariq Tell: “The World the Bedouin Lived in. Climate, Migration and Politics in the Early Modern Arab East,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58, 2015, 21–55.

*Samar El Mikati El Kaissi*

Archives & Special Collections Librarian at the American University of Beirut (AUB). BA in Business Computer, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980. MS in Library and Information Science, Simmons College, Boston, USA, 2015. Recipient of AUB President’s Service Excellence Award, 2014. Member of various international and national societies: Beta Phi Mu Honorary Society, USA; The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA), UK; Lebanese Library Association; Modern Heritage Observatory (MOHO); and the Society of Lebanese Custodians of Manuscripts. Co-authored with Dr. Nadia El-Cheikh a chapter entitled “Women at AUB: The Beginnings, 1905–1947” published in “One Hundred and Fifty”, Beirut: AUB press, 2016.

*Claudia Ott*

studied Arabic, Oriental Languages and Islamic Studies at the Universities of Jerusalem, Tübingen (MA) and Berlin (PhD) and Arabic Music (nay) at Cairo. In her doctoral dissertation, she researched manuscripts of Arabian Epics, many of them from Wetzstein’s collections (*Metamorphosen des Epos*, 2003). She is well-known as the German translator of the Muhsin Mahdi edition of the Arabian Nights (*Tausendundeine Nacht*, 2004), the Kayseri manuscript of the same work (*Tausendundeine Nacht – Das glückliche Ende*, 2016) and of Arabic love poetry (*Gold auf Lapislazuli*, 2008). In 2012, she published the first translation

ever of the Aga Khan Manuscript of the Hundred and One Nights (*101 Nacht*, 2012). Claudia Ott is Associate Member of the Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Göttingen. [www.tausendundeine-nacht.com](http://www.tausendundeine-nacht.com)

*Holger Preißler*

(1943–2006) studied Arabic and Semitic Studies in Leipzig where he graduated with a dissertation on “Dependency in South Arabia in the middle Sabaic period” (*Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse in Südarabien in mittelsabäischer Zeit*). He served as professor for the History of Religion in Leipzig, for Islamic Studies in Saarbrücken, and again for Islamic Studies and Near Eastern History of Religions in Leipzig. His numerous publications treat aspects of Ancient South Arabian language and society, Arabic literature, and developments in contemporary religions, and include a translation of the Crusader-era memoirs of the knight Usāma b. Munqid̄ (*Die Erlebnisse des syrischen Ritters Usāma ibn Munqid̄. Unterhaltendes und Belehrendes aus der Zeit der Kreuzzüge*. Leipzig / Weimar 1981). Fundamental contributions to the history of Orientalist scholarship in the Early Modern period, particularly in Leipzig.

*Christoph Rauch*

studied Arabic philology, Islamic studies and religion at the University of Leipzig. In 2002 he received a fellowship from the Volkswagen-Stiftung at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and made several research trips to Sanaa/Yemen. Since 2004 he has worked at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, where he was appointed head of the Oriental Department in 2010. His research interests cover Islamic manuscripts and the history of Oriental collections in the Western world. He co-organized several conferences and exhibitions on manuscript collections and the history of Oriental studies. He is co-editor of *Heroic Times: A Thousand years of the Persian Book of Kings* (Berlin 2011, with Julia Gonnella), *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Leiden 2015, with D. Hollenberg and S. Schmidtke), *The Diez Albums* (Leiden 2016, with J. Gonnella and F. Weis) and *Oriental Bible Manuscripts from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-PK* (Wiesbaden 2016, with M. Pehlivanian and R. Vollandt).

*Helga Rebhan*

read Islamic and Arabic studies at the universities of Erlangen and Damascus and sojourned for PhD studies two years in Cairo. Currently she is the head of the Oriental and Asian Department at the Bavarian State Library in Munich and the area specialist for Arabic and Islamic studies. She has curated several exhibitions on Islamic and other Oriental and Asian manuscripts, e.g. “Prachtkorane aus tausend Jahren” in 1998 and “The Wonders of creation” in 2010. She

has frequently lectured on Oriental and Asian manuscripts to university students and, in 2012 and 2018, was lecturer in a course on Islamic manuscripts at the University of Leipzig. From 2009–2016, she was president of MELCom International.

*Anke Scharrahs*

Ph.D., is a freelance conservator specializing in polychrome wooden interiors from Ottoman Syria. For 20 years she has been engaged in research and conservation of Syrian-Ottoman interiors, both in museum collections in Berlin, Dresden, New York, Los Angeles, Honolulu, and Doha as well as in historic houses in Damascus and Hama. She is the author of the book *Damascene 'Ajami Interiors: Forgotten Jewels of Interior Design* (London, 2013).

*Jan Just Witkam*

is professor emeritus of the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, with the chair 'Manuscript culture of the Islamic World'. He has published on many aspects of Islamic book culture ([www.janjustwitkam.nl/publications/index.html](http://www.janjustwitkam.nl/publications/index.html)). He is editor-in-chief of *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, published by Brill, Leiden.

## Note on Transliteration and Dates

For the transliteration of Arabic terms, we followed the rules of the *Arabica* journal respectively ISO 233/DIN 31635. Dates have been given according to the Christian (Gregorian) calendar (but without BC, AD, BCE or CE). If a Hiġrī (Islamic lunar) date is mentioned, AH precedes the date and the Christian date is given after a slash, e.g. AH 750/1349–1350.



# Introduction

*Boris Liebrecht and Christoph Rauch*

February 19, 2015 marked the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905). A student of the Middle East who is aware of the major achievements of such 19th century luminaries as Silvestre de Sacy, Fleischer, de Goeje, or Goldziher, may be forgiven for having never heard this name. Many standard accounts of the history of the field mention him only in passing, if at all.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his long and colourful life, Wetzstein took on many roles: consul and collector, businessman and scholar, traveler and teacher, yet he never held a chair at a university. His many scattered publications, though rich in material and insight, were small in size and impact.<sup>2</sup> His name is not connected with a thriving circle of students he taught nor with a major work that defined scholarship for generations. Still, as this volume will hopefully show, Wetzstein was not only a scholar whose experience and expertise commanded respect in his time, but an exemplary figure who still offers important insights to our own.

Wetzstein, the son of a tawer, studied Protestant theology and Semitic languages in Leipzig from 1836 onwards. He completed his doctorate in 1839 with the famous Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship. He subsequently habilitated in 1846 in Berlin with Friedrich Rückert on Oriental literature and continued to work at the University of Berlin as *Privatdozent* (private lecturer) for Arabic and Persian. After his first wife Henriette's tragic death in childbirth in 1848, Wetzstein intensified efforts to leave Germany for the East and applied for the new position of Prussian Hon-

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1 Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1955, p. 191; Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 87 and 99 and Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism: The study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 150 and *passim*.

2 A bibliography of his scattered publications has been compiled by H.-J. Zobel, "Johann Gottfried Wetzsteins Schrifttum", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 82 (1966), pp. 233–238. However, printed excerpts from his dissertation, never published completely, are not included, see the contribution of Preisler to this volume. See also C. Rauch, "Wetzstein, Johann Gottfried", in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 27, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, forthcoming.



FIGURE 1.1 *Ernestine und Johann Gottfried Wetzstein im Jahr ihrer Eheschließung 1853*  
DAGUERREOTYPIE AUS DEM PRIVATBESITZ VON S. KNEZ, MONHEIM (BAY-  
ERN)

orary Consul in Damascus, where he stayed from 1849 until 1861. Because of his networking skills and excellent Arabic, he established close contacts in Damascus to local shaykhs and notables. To cover the unexpectedly high costs of his position he invested in agriculture projects. He conducted several research expeditions to places such as the Hawran (1858) and Eastern Jordan (1860). His account of his journey to the Hawran was the first comprehensive description of Southern Syria. Wetzstein's reasons for later leaving his position to go back to Germany were both economic and personal. Wetzstein married a second time in 1853. His wife Ernestine lived with him in Damascus but remained in Berlin after a home visit in 1857 because of concerns about her health. The anti-Christian riots in Syria, too, left a very deep impression on him and created difficulties for his agricultural projects. Because of his esteemed position among different groups in Damascus he played a prominent role as a protector of Christians as well as a mediator in conflicts.

From 1867 until 1875, Wetzstein resumed his lectures at the University of Berlin and also taught at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Although he was well respected in politics and society, he was never granted the academic career he had hoped for. In autumn 1870, the Foreign Office charged Wetzstein and Gerhard Rohlfs with a secret mission to Tunis.<sup>3</sup> After his return he devoted his research in particular to Arabic popular literature. However, he was never able to realize his more ambitious projects, such as an encyclopedic work on the language and literature of the Bedouins in Syria or an edition of the 'Antar epic. Today, Wetzstein's name is mostly mentioned in connection with the enormous Arabic manuscript collections he brought to Europe, which are often seen as his major contribution to the field. His acquisitions contributed significantly to the holdings of libraries in Tübingen, Leipzig and Berlin.

The list of research on Wetzstein is short. Aside from a few articles devoted to him,<sup>4</sup> there is the important work of Ingeborg Huhn, who reconstructed the life and activities of Wetzstein during his stay in Damascus based on his correspondence and other materials in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.<sup>5</sup> The enlarge-

3 Peter Heine, "Das Rohlfs/Wetzstein-Unternehmen in Tunis während des deutsch-französischen Krieges 1870/71", *Die Welt des Islams*, 22 (1982) 1.4, pp. 61–66.

4 Eberhard von Mülinen, "Des Nomaden Abschied: Eine Erinnerung an Konsul Dr. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (geb. 19. Febr. 1815 zu Ölsnitz, gest. 18. Jan. 1905 zu Berlin)", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 79 (1925), pp. 150–161; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, "Zum Gedenken an Johann Gottfried Wetzstein", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 60 (1965) pp. 541–545 and Gerhard Küchler, "Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Königlich Preußischer Konsul in Damaskus 1848–1862, Orientalist und Freund Alexander von Humboldts", *Jahrbuch für Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte*, 29 (1978), pp. 7–24.

5 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus*



FIGURE 1.2 *Konsul Dr. Joh. Gottfr. Wetzstein besucht im Jahre 1855 den Scheich eines ihm befreundeten Beduinen-Stammes in den Ruinen von Baalbeck*, painting by Bernhard Fiedler, undated  
ETHNOLOGISCHES MUSEUM, STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN –  
PK, I B DLG 7

ment of this archive and the foundation of the *Stiftung Dr. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein* in 1980 with the aim of promoting research on Wetzstein and his collections was very much the achievement of Hedda Wetzstein (d. 1990), the granddaughter of the scholar. In 2006, Ingeborg Huhn published a catalogue of the Staatsbibliothek's Wetzstein bequest.<sup>6</sup> A part of the bequest went missing when books and other materials were removed from Berlin during World

(1849–1861): *Dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1989 and the recent enhanced re-edition Ingeborg Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preussischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 2016.

6 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006.

War II in order to protect them from military destruction. Rumors that the missing material, which contains diaries from his time in Damascus, had turned up in the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow, where many other Berlin collections still remain, have yet to be confirmed. The bequest in Berlin also contains some of Wetzstein's personal documents and research papers. Some of his translations from Arabic were edited soon after his death: *The Lovers of Amasia* (*Die Liebenden von Amasia*, 1906) and a *Book of Omens* (*Die Königslose*, 1929). Recently, another interesting find, Wetzstein's partial translation of the Quran, was edited by Ingeborg Huhn and Hars Kurio (*Die ersten 11 Suren des Koran*, 2015).

To celebrate his 200th birthday, a symposium was held at Berlin's Staatsbibliothek, one of the institutions that profited from Wetzstein's avid collecting activity. By far the largest collection of his Arabic manuscripts is now held there, forming the core of the Islamic manuscripts collection together with those of his friends and colleagues Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876) and Aloys Sprenger (1813–1893).

The symposium and the resulting papers demonstrate two ways in which the legacy of Wetzstein's manifold interests and activities remain relevant to researchers today. One is direct, through his biography, his published works, his far-flung network of correspondents, and the documents from his estate. These offer insights into the career development of scholars and diplomats in his time, how they built their collections, and the places where they lived and worked. The other way is indirect, through the many manuscript sources that Wetzstein brought back and that inspired and enabled generations of scholars to explore countless aspects of Arabic literature.

The first set of contributions, Part 1, entitled **Berlin** after his principal residence, presents the life and impact of Wetzstein in his homeland. The late **Holger Preißler** (1943–2006) discusses Wetzstein as researcher in an introductory overview, originally presented in September 2005 at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Wetzstein's death. In his own scholarly work, Preißler was committed to the history of Oriental and manuscript studies in Germany. **Ludmila Hanisch** (1947–2015) then describes developments in Oriental studies at the University of Berlin, the academic setting in which Wetzstein worked. Her paper shows how Semitic studies evolved in the context of a more differentiated classification of languages from Indian/Indo-European studies. She also discusses the more practical interests in the Middle East that emerged after the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. **Christoph Rauch** deals with the cataloguing of Islamic manuscripts at the Royal Library in Berlin against the backdrop of its extensive acquisitions during the second half of the 19th century and the rapid enhancement

of cataloguing standards during this period. He also tells the story behind the fragment of Wetzstein's own handwritten catalogue.

Part 2, *The Wetzstein Collections*, presents a broader overview of his manuscript acquisitions as well as detailed studies devoted to particular works within them. Many researchers will find that they can trace the material foundation of their work, the manuscripts they use or those forming the basis of particular editions, came to us through the efforts of Wetzstein and similar collectors. His interest in all aspects of Arabic literature and manuscript culture, one not confined only to rare treasures, helped preserve much of the material that scholarship has been increasingly drawn to in recent years. The historiography of the Syrian lands in particular owes much to his efforts, as the Wetzstein collections in Berlin, Leipzig and Tübingen preserve irreplaceable and often unique copies of some of its major historians like Ibn Ayyūb, Ibn Kannān and Ibn Ṭūlūn. First, the history of Wetzstein's manuscript collection in Tübingen is presented by **Michaela Hoffman-Ruf**. Her contribution also includes the history of the collection's readers, its catalog, and an introduction to its most important manuscripts. Wetzstein's keen awareness of current scholarly trends led him to acquire specimens illustrating the history of the Quran, among them many important fragments from the earliest stages of its development. **François Déroche** analyses these fragments and places Wetzstein's interest in the context of critical developments in contemporary studies of the history of the Quran. One genre to which Wetzstein devoted much time and resources was that of the popular story, exemplified in hundreds of manuscript volumes throughout his collections. These manuscripts and their readers are analyzed in the contribution by **Jan Just Witkam** whereas **Claudia Ott** gives in her contribution an overview on the development of literary traditions that are summarized under the literary genre of the *sīra ša'biyya*. One of these epic texts, the Alexander story has been the subject of **Faustina Doufikar-Aerts'** scholarship for many years. In her contribution, she recounts how her work began with manuscripts from the Wetzstein collections. Lastly, **Boris Liebreuz** and **Christoph Rauch** provide a short catalogue of some of the manuscripts Wetzstein kept in his private library and which entered the Staatsbibliothek together with his bequest soon after his death.

The contributions in Part 3, *Collecting Oriental Manuscripts*, provide a context for Wetzstein's manuscripts and introduce us to the historical aspects of other collections. The acquisition history of Oriental manuscripts for the Munich Court Library in the 19th century, starting with the secularization of Bavarian monasteries in 1803, is the object of **Helga Rebhan's** article. The most important book collection acquired with regard to Oriental content was that of the French scholar Étienne-Marc Quatremère (1782–1857) in 1858, just around

the time when Wetzstein was selling his own manuscripts. **Alba Fedeli** tells the story of the temporarily missing Lewis Quranic palimpsest, offering insights into the practices of trading manuscripts in the early 20th century. **Kaoukab Chebaro** and **Samar El Mikati El Kaissi** introduce us to collections still extant in the region of their origin, those of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut that would later turn into the American University of Beirut. They describe the use of such collections in the context of an academic institution at the turn of the 20th century and in an environment that saw the breakthrough of print publishing in the region.

Part 4, *Damascus*, is devoted to arguably the most important period of Wetzstein's career, one that also shaped his public perception as "the consul", as well as to the city that he called home for more than a decade. **Astrid Meier** describes Wetzstein's particular merit as an explorer of Damascus' rural hinterland and the Syrian desert. His published accounts, which are still today of value, remained confined mostly to a German-speaking audience. **Boris Liebreuz** analyzes the consul's efforts to sell Arabic texts published in Leipzig within the context of the introduction of printed books in the Ottoman Empire. **Ingeborg Huhn** expands on her previous archival research to include previously inaccessible material from the former GDR. These documents provide insights into how Wetzstein was viewed by his colleagues in the diplomatic service. **Anke Scharrahs** presents the architectural environment that Wetzstein inhabited in Damascus, one shared by inhabitants of different religious backgrounds. His notions of what it meant to act as representative of an important state were formed in the lavishly decorated salons in the houses of notables, merchants and consuls that he frequented. Wetzstein's traits as scholar, diplomat, or collector stand out when contrasted with others. **Robert Irwin** shows Richard Burton to be an antithesis to Wetzstein, without either his characteristic scholarly erudition or his love of manuscripts. While Wetzstein bought many a copy of the Arabian Nights or similar works of literature, Burton dared to translate the text – with questionable success.

A full-fledged biography of Wetzstein would be a meritorious undertaking. This volume can claim no more than to be a first approach. To appreciate his life in all its aspects, full consideration still needs to be given of the archival record. Ingeborg Huhn has paved the way with the material preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, yet much of Wetzstein's correspondence is scattered today in the estates of the many colleagues and friends he exchanged letters with.

Even with the material accessible today, contemporary evaluations of Wetzstein's character, merits and achievements vary considerably. Besides voices that emphasize his personal kindness and the support he lent to fellow researchers and travelers in Damascus and back home, there were also those of



FIGURE 1.3 *Portrait von Wetzstein*

PHOTO: E. BIEBER, BERLIN-STEGLITZ, 1884, STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN  
– PK, NACHLASS WETZSTEIN II, KASTEN 5

his peers who occasionally criticized his conduct as consul or his financial dealings in agriculture and in the manuscript trade (see the contribution by Huhn). However, his actions during the 1860 massacre found unanimous acclaim as heroic. Like any individual, Wetzstein was not free of all prejudice. While he was able to overcome some stereotypes common to his time, he embraced others. Openness and respect for Arab and Islamic literature and culture gave way to an identification with some of the other prejudices of his hosts. For example, his letters and publications occasionally reveal racially tainted perceptions of blacks<sup>7</sup> and Kurds.<sup>8</sup>

Despite everything that was outstanding about this life, much of it followed the familiar path of other Orientalists trained in the first half of the 19th century. Although this period is often hailed as the time when Orientalism broke free from theology as an independent and mostly philological pursuit, there is a strong tradition of Biblical and exegetical training that also permeates Wetzstein's work. He may have lamented his lack of success in this academic tradition, yet it is to our continuing benefit that he did not follow the same path as his teacher Fleischer and many other philologists of the era and found his most lasting success as a consul and collector.

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7 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, "Der Markt in Damaskus", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 11 (1857), pp. 475–525, here p. 509.

8 Bibliothek der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Halle (Saale), estate of Albert Socin, 1. Korrespondenz, letter Wetzstein to Socin, Berlin 1888. Among many insults, Wetzstein says of the Kurds, p. 3: "Es dürfte schwer sein, ein geistloseres, stumpfsinnigeres Volk aufzufinden, als die Kurden."



**PART 1**

*Berlin*





## Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als Forscher

*Holger Preißler †*

In einem wohl formulierten, höflich-selbstbewussten Schreiben an das „Hohe Königliche Preußische Staatsministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten“ vom 1. August 1848 bewarb sich Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, gebürtiger sächsischer Vogtländer, seit 1846 preußischer Untertan, um ein preußisches Konsulat im Vorderen Orient.<sup>1</sup> „Das Ziel meiner Reise ist Damaskus,“ meinte er lapidar. Die südsyrische Metropole wurde zum Zentrum seines Lebens. Natürlich wird er als evangelischer Christ und später als lutherischer Theologiestudent in Leipzig die Stadt wenigstens durch die Paulusgeschichte gekannt haben. Diese Grundkenntnisse dürften durch das mehrjährige Studium orientalischer Sprachen und Texte, zuerst – bis 1835 – bei dem vielseitigen Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller (1768–1835) und dann bei dem aufgehenden Stern der arabischen Studien in Leipzig, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888), erweitert worden sein. Aber der Name von Damaskus war nicht nur mit vergangener Größe verbunden, sondern seit 1840 auch mit der für den Orient neuartigen Ritualmordklage gegen Damaszener Juden, deren Folgen für sie und der erstmaligen Solidarisierung europäischer Juden mit ihren orientalischen Glaubensbrüdern. Die von Wetzsteins Lehrer Julius Fürst (1805–1873) herausgegebene Zeitschrift „Orient“ ging ausführlich darauf ein. Auch Wetzstein veröffentlichte in ihr, ebenso wie sein junger Lehrer Fleischer und sein theologischer Freund Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890). Von Wetzstein erschienen im „Orient“ große Teile seiner ansonsten unauffindbaren Dissertation über islamische Prophetenlegenden nach einer Leipziger Handschrift des vielseitigen islamischen Autors ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bistāmī aus dem 15. Jahrhundert.<sup>2</sup> Fleischer wünschte von

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- 1 This article presents the lecture Holger Preißler (1943–2006) held on September 15, 2005 at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin on occasion of the opening of a small exhibition to memorialize the centennial anniversary of Wetzstein's death. Our thanks are to his wife Antje Preißler for providing us with the script and the permission for publishing it. For this purpose the text has been carefully edited and complemented with notes.
  - 2 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, „Die Prophetenlegenden des Islam: Aus dem Arabischen des Abderrahman Bestami übersetzt“, *Der Orient: Berichte, Studien und Kritiken für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, 5 (1841), Sp. 54–57; 7, 1841, Sp. 88–92; 9, 1841, Sp. 120–124; 10, 1841, Sp. 139–143; *idem*, „Von der Zeitrechnung: Aus dem Arabischen des Abderrahman Bestami

ihm die Beschäftigung mit mittelalterlicher arabischer und jüdischer Grammatikgeschichte, wie übrigens dreißig Jahre später auch von ihrem gemeinsamen Schüler Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921). Beide wollten diesen Weg nicht dauerhaft einschlagen, auch wenn sie ihren Beitrag pflichtgemäß leisteten.

Nach Damaskus kam Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul im Frühjahr 1849 über Beirut. Bis zum Frühjahr 1861 sollte er bleiben, länger als geplant, auch unterbrochen von monatelangen Aufenthalten in Deutschland. Bemühungen um eine ordentliche Professur in der Heimat schlugen fehl. Die Hoffnungen, die er namentlich 1859 auf Berlin, Bonn oder Leipzig setzte, als Fleischer die Nachfolge des als Lexikograph bekannten Georg Wilhelm Freytag (1788–1861) in Bonn oder eine Berliner Professur angeboten wurden, schlugen fehl, nach Halle wollte er wohl nicht gehen. Wetzstein blieb also Privatdozent. Aber der Konsul, wie er auch im akademischen Bereich genannt wurde, beeindruckte durch seine Interessenvielfalt und seine anregende Lehre. Der bereits erwähnte Goldziher bemerkte in seinem veröffentlichten Tagebuch für seine Berliner Zeit 1868:

Ausser einigen philosophischen und allgemeinen Vorlesungen hörte ich Bibel, Arabisch und Syrisch bei Rödiger, Dieterici, Haarbrücker und Wetzstein. Nur bei letzterem, der als Konsul a. D. in der Eigenschaft eines Privatdozenten Vorlesungen über Beduinen, Sprache und Sitten derselben hielt, wurde ich angeregt. Rödiger's alttestamentliche Vorlesungen hätte man aus den Büchern ebenso studiren können; seine arabischen Stunden waren ganz schülerhaft. Seine große Erudition wirkte auf den Schüler nicht.<sup>3</sup>

Bis 1875 lehrte Wetzstein. Künftige Orientalisten wie Albert Socin (1844–1899) und Eugen Prym (1843–1913), Franz Praetorius (1847–1927) und Friedrich Delitzsch (1850–1922), Vertreter unterschiedlicher Richtungen und Fächer, verdankten ihm nachweislich viel. Socin und Prym folgten auch seinen Spuren in den Orient.

Im Allgemeinen kennt man aus der Fachgeschichte die oft hochfliegenden Pläne von Wissenschaftlern nur unzureichend, sieht meist nur die publizierten Resultate ihrer Forschungen. Anders bei Wetzstein: Sein reicher handschriftlicher Nachlass gestattet weitere Einblicke. Bereits in der Bewerbung um das Konsulat hatte er sein Programm niedergelegt. Er kam als gelehrter Orientalist,

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übersetzt“, *Der Orient: Berichte, Studien und Kritiken für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur*, 22, 1841, Sp. 321–326; 23, 1841, Sp. 341–345.

3 Ignaz Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, hg. Alexander Scheiber, Leiden, Brill, 1978, S. 37.

der sich durch seine umfangreichen Sprach- und Sachkenntnisse auszeichnete, die er schnell erweiterte und, wie sein väterlicher Lehrer Fleischer schrieb, „in gewandter, lebendiger Mittheilung vortrefflich auszubeuten weiß“ (Brief an den Vater vom 26. 2. 1857).<sup>4</sup> Aber er war auch Diplomat, als unbesoldeter Konsul auch Unternehmer und schließlich noch Grundbesitzer – nicht immer erfolgreich, aber doch zielstrebig und tatkräftig. In der ausführlichen „Motivierung der Nothwendigkeit einer Vertretung Preußens in Damaskus durch Errichtung eines besoldeten Consulats daselbst“ vom 9. März 1852, die Ingeborg Huhn dankenswerterweise veröffentlicht hat,<sup>5</sup> werden auch die wissenschaftlichen Aufgaben für Damaskus umrissen. Und es ist erstaunlich, wie eindeutig Wetzstein diesen seinen Vorstellungen gefolgt ist, auch wenn seine Projekte und Überlegungen, wie sie in manchen seiner leider verstreuten Veröffentlichungen angedeutet wurden, darüber hinausgingen.

Vier Gebiete sind es, die den Forscher Wetzstein besonders bewegten:

1. die Landeskunde Südsyriens sowie Transjordanien und Nordarabiens,
2. das Auffinden und Kopieren von antiken Inschriften,
3. das Sammeln von arabischen Handschriften und
4. das Bemühen um das zeitgenössische Arabisch.

Sie alle sind auf Damaskus und seine Umgebung konzentriert.

Dabei ist der allgemeine west- und mitteleuropäische Kenntnisstand um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts zu beachten. In der „Motivierung“ schreibt Wetzstein:

„Es ist bekannt, daß ganze Partien Syriens geothetisch selbst noch gar nicht aufgenommen sind. Herr Freiherr Alex. v. Humboldt legte mir kürztl. die 15 Blätter des Zimmermannschen Atlas von der südl. Hälfte Syriens vor, und ich sah darauf noch ganze Districte als terra incognita verzeichnet.“<sup>6</sup> Angeregt von dem einflussreichen Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), der sich auch beim König für die Berufung Wetzsteins zum Konsul einsetzte, und durch den Geographen Carl Ritter (1779–1859) machte sich Wetzstein bald auf den Weg, nicht mit falscher Identität wie sein späterer Reisepartner Gerhard Rohlfs (1831–1896) in Marokko oder Palgrave in Arabien, sondern als stolzer Konsul. Sieben Reisen listet Ingeborg Huhn auf,<sup>7</sup> die längsten führten ihn im Frühjahr 1858 in 46 Tagen durch den Ḥaurān ins Ostjordanland und von April bis Juni 1860 in 69 Tagen, begleitet von dem Vermessungsingenieur Richard Dörgens, noch ein-

4 UB Leipzig, NL 267 / 6 / 11, Nr. 364, S. 3.

5 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): Dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1989, S. 353–384.

6 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, S. 358.

7 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, S. 4–5.

mal ins Ostjordanland. Für die erste liegt der „Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen“ gedruckt vor (Berlin 1860), über die zweite berichtete Dörgens<sup>8</sup>. Der „Reisebericht“ wirkt bis heute durch seine lebendige, gut lesbare Darstellung, die im besten Sinne komplex genannt werden kann. Geographische Notizen, insbesondere zu der beeindruckend düsteren vulkanischen Gegend des Ḥaurān, wechseln mit Beschreibungen vom freundlichen und weniger freundlichen Umgang mit den kriegerischen Bewohnern des Gebiets. Exzerpte aus historischen Quellen sind mit Beobachtungen der Sprache und mündlichen Traditionen verbunden. Doch darauf beschränkte sich Wetzstein nicht. Mit Hilfe mittelalterlicher Quellen, neuer Reisebeschreibungen und auf Grund von Berichten von arabischen und türkischen Bekannten schafft er gleichsam als einen Zusatz zur Nordarabienkarte in Kiepers Atlas eine angesichts der geringen Mittel doch solide Geographie des nördlichen Arabien, das damals noch weitgehend unbekannt war, aber durch die Aktivitäten der puritanischen und expansiven Wahhabiten große Aufmerksamkeit gefunden hat, ganz ohne Erdöl und dergleichen. Leider ist sein „Nordarabien und die syrische Wüste nach den Angaben der Eingeborenen“ nur in mehreren Folgen in der *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde* erschienen.<sup>9</sup> Auch diese umfangreiche Darstellung ist noch immer gut zu lesen, nicht ohne Humor geschrieben, versehen mit gelungenen Übersetzungen arabischer Dichtung. Wetzstein spricht voller Achtung von seinen einheimischen Informanten, unter denen namentlich der Scheich der ‘Anaza-Beduinen, Muḥammad ibn Dūḥī, „Phylarch der Weld ‘Alī“, ihm mehrfach Hilfe und Kenntnisse vermittelte und in seinen Arbeiten wiederholt genannt wird. Er schätzte sein Gegenüber und dieser wusste es wohl auch zu würdigen.

Das südsyrische Ḥaurān-Gebiet, Ostjordanien und Nordarabien wurden durch Wetzstein der neueren europäischen Geographie erschlossen. Sein eigentlicher Wirkungsort Damaskus trat dabei zurück. Eine umfassende Beschreibung, die er anfangs noch plante, erschien nie. Sie wurde im Grunde durch die Veröffentlichung seines österreichischen Kollegen Alfred Kremer (1828–1889) ersetzt. Es blieb ein Kabinetstück, entstanden, als beim Stuttgarter Philologenkongress ein Referent ausfiel und der anwesende Konsul aufgefordert wurde, von seinen Beobachtungen in Syrien zu berichten. So ver-

8 Richard Doergens, „Consul Wetzstein's und R. Doergens Reise in das Ost-Jordan-Land“, *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, 9 (1860), S. 402–420.

9 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, „Nordarabien und die syrische Wüste nach den Angaben der Eingeborenen“, *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F. 18 (1865), S. 1–47, 241–282 und 408–498.

fasste er dann den „Markt von Damaskus“,<sup>10</sup> der 1859 in der *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* erschien und eigentlich bis heute zur Standardlektüre eines Damaskus-Freundes zählen sollte, auch wenn gerade in den letzten Jahrzehnten vieles von dem damals Erlebten durch die ungezügelter Urbanisierung der Oasenstadt verschwunden ist. Damaskus bewahrte über Jahrhunderte eine besondere Bedeutung als Ausgangspunkt der syrischen Pilgerkarawane. Wetzstein erwähnte sie gelegentlich und sammelte wohl auch nützliche Nachrichten direkt und von einem Gewährsmann, der viele Jahre der Kommandant des bewaffneten Geleitkommandos war. Zu einer publizierten Niederschrift kam es leider nicht.

Der Konsul kannte seine Stadt; durch Reisen und Sommeraufenthalte in der angenehm ländlichen und gebirgigen Umgebung der Oase lernte er auch das ländliche Leben der Syrer und ihre Alltagskultur kennen, die er als erster Europäer mit großer Sachkenntnis und tiefer Sympathie beschrieb.

Daraus ist keine „Landes- und Volkskunde Südsyriens“ entstanden. Diese gibt es bis heute nicht, obwohl gerade z. B. die neueren Forschungen meines Heidelberger Kollegen Heinz Arnold zum Qalamün-Gebiet nördlich von Damaskus und die neue Monographie meines alten Freundes ‘Abdallâh Hannâ zu seinem aufblühenden Heimatort Deir ‘Atiyya wichtiges zu diesem Thema beigetragen haben. Wetzstein konnte nur einzelne Aspekte darlegen. Besonderen Einfluss erlangte zeitweilig seine Darstellung ländlicher syrischer Hochzeitsbräuche als landeskundlicher Beitrag zum seinerzeit bedeutsamen Kommentar zum Alten Testament, in diesem Falle zum „Hohen Lied“, den sein Leipziger Studienfreund Franz Delitzsch 1874 herausgab.<sup>11</sup> Der mögliche Vergleich von alttestamentlichen und rezenten syrischen Bräuchen machte im letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts in der Bibelwissenschaft Furore und wurde dann von dem Theologen Karl Budde (1850–1935) in seinem Handkommentar 1898 weiter verbreitet. Methodische Zweifel an einem zu direkten Vergleich meldeten dann allerdings Greßmann und Hermann Gunkel an.<sup>12</sup> ohne den Nutzen solcher landeskundlichen Forschungen zur Exegese in Frage zu stellen.

10 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, „Der Markt in Damaskus“, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 11 (1857), S. 475–525.

11 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, „Bemerkungen zum Hohenliede“ und „Excursus zum Hohenliede und zu Koheleth“, in *Biblischer Commentar über die poetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments, Band IV: Hoheslied und Koheleth*, hg. Franz Delitzsch und Carl Friedrich Keil, Leipzig, Dörffling und Franke, 1875, S. 162–177 und 437–455.

12 Hugo Greßmann und Hermann Gunkel, „Hohes Lied“, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, Bd. 2, 2. Aufl., hg. Hermann Gunkel und Leopold Zscharnack, Tübingen, Mohr, 1928, Sp. 1991–1992.

Die Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts entstehende Palästinaforschung förderte sie und Gelehrte wie Wetzsteins Schüler Albert Socin und der Theologe Gustav Dalman (1855–1941) bauten auch auf Vorstellungen auf, wie sie der Konsul entwickelt hatte, nicht zu vergessen den großen Orientalisten Enno Littmann (1875–1958), der ihm seine unverhohlene Hochachtung entgegenbrachte und ihm in manchen seiner Forschungen Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts folgte.

Zum 2. Gebiet: Wetzstein schreibt in seiner „Motivierung“: „Damaskus bietet große Ausbeute für altsyr., röm., byzant. u. arab. Denkmäler.“ Wetzsteins Interessen beschränkten sich nicht auf den islamisch geprägten Orient. Humanistisch und theologisch gebildet, bezog er die verschiedensten Monumente in seine Interessen ein. Bei seinen Reisen in den Süden kopierte er Inschriften, griechische und einige wenige lateinische, die er später auch veröffentlichte, sowie nabatäische und nicht zuletzt safaitische. Diese Aufzeichnungen, noch nicht Foto-grafien oder Abklatsche, besitzen einen historischen dokumentarischen Wert, denn viele von ihnen sind später verloren gegangen, zerstört oder verbaut worden. Als erster entdeckte Wetzstein für die Orientalistik jenseits des Ḥaurān-Gebirges die einfachen Felsgraffiti, die nomadisierende Araber im Altertum in südarabischer Buchstabenschrift – Wetzstein nannte sie „sabäische Denkmäler“ – verfasst haben und die später als safaitische Texte bezeichnet werden, ohne dass es ihm gelang sie zu entziffern und auszuwerten. Der genannte Enno Littmann unternahm dann als einer unter mehreren – der Belgier Gonzague Ryckmans mit seinem *Corpus inscriptionum safaiticarum* oder der Hallenser Alttestamentler Otto Eißfeldt wären unter den Späteren hier zu nennen – die Darstellung dieser einfachen Texte mit ihren naiven beige-fügten Zeichnungen.

Zum 3. Gebiet: Wetzstein schreibt in seiner „Motivierung“: „Die syr. Sultane hatten durchgängig die Wschafft [Wissenschaft] sehr begünstigt, und Damaskus war beständig der Hauptsitz der arab. Gelehrsamkeit. Ich kann nicht umhin, hier auf die Handschriftensammlung zu verweißen, welche ich aus Damaskus mitgebracht habe.“<sup>13</sup>

Um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts nahm zwar die Zahl der Drucke orientalischer Texte in Westeuropa, auch in deutschen Städten, doch auch in Bulāq bei Kairo bedeutend zu, trotzdem blieb der größte Teil der ungeheuer reichen Literatur in arabischer Sprache allein in Handschriften bewahrt, so dass Orientalisten selbst Grundtexte in Manuskripten lesen mussten. Noch in den 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts wertete Ignaz Goldziher zahllose arabische Manuskripte mühsam für seine Studien zur islamischen Religion aus. Es bestand

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13 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, S. 359.

also die große Notwendigkeit, handschriftliche Texte zu erwerben, zu konservieren und zu katalogisieren und deren Edition nach den sich entwickelnden historisch-kritischen Methoden vorzubereiten.

Unter den deutschsprachigen Orientalisten war es Wetzstein, der die größte Zahl von arabischen Manuskripten in deutsche Bibliotheken gebracht hat. Weder Berlin noch Leipzig gehörten vor ihm zu den bedeutenden deutschen Sammlungen, Gotha machte durch das Wirken des Reisenden Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) eine Ausnahme. Etwa 3.000 Bände arabische Handschriften erwarb Wetzstein vor allem in Damaskus und verkaufte sie dann in Preußen, Sachsen und Württemberg unter insgesamt günstigen Bedingungen.

Zum 4. Gebiet: Wetzstein war ein gut ausgebildeter Philologe, ein treuer Schüler Fleischers, wohl auch mit einem gutem Gehör und der Bereitschaft, anscheinend alltägliche Dinge, nicht nur Zeugnisse hoher arabischer Gelehrsamkeit genau zu erfassen und zu beschreiben, wobei zu bedenken ist, dass die Lehre des Arabischen damals in Deutschland sehr weit von praktischen Kenntnissen entfernt war, abstruse Theorien über die physischen Bedingungen der Aussprache semitischer Laute kursierten und man abseits von Fleischer, der in Paris auch syrische Umgangssprache gelernt und praktiziert hatte, kaum ein Gespür für das gesprochene Arabisch gewinnen konnte. Sprachliche Notizen waren in den landeskundlichen Arbeiten Wetzsteins verstreut, Dialektproben umschrieben und übersetzt. Er legte Wert auf eine genaue Wiedergabe der Vokale. Besonders ging es ihm um die genaue Übersetzung von Sachbegriffen. Darin leistete er einen wenig beachteten soliden Beitrag zur arabischen Lexikographie, vor allem der rezenten Sprache.

Wetzstein arbeitete nicht nur für die engen Kreise seiner orientalistischen Fachkollegen, sondern war auch bereit, sich ebenso in der damals beliebten Erd-, Völker- und Landeskunde gut verständlich, plastisch und eindringlich zu äußern. Damit überschritt er Grenzen, die durch die weitere Spezialisierung und Differenzierung seit Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts enger gezogen wurden und nun mühsam unter Schlagwörtern wie Interdisziplinarität wieder durchlässig gemacht werden sollen. Er war ein Pionier, der sich auf Vorgänger wie Fleischer oder Ritter bezog, die für die Geographie oder die Arabistik neue feste Fundamente geschaffen hatten. Es war ihm nicht vergönnt, *opera magna* zu schaffen. Zum Vollenden fehlten ihm die Bedingungen und vielleicht auch die Veranlassung. Als Reisender im Neuland kannte er die Notwendigkeit, Weggefährten zu finden: Informanten unter Arabern und Türken, Muslime, Christen und Juden, Kollegen, die seine Freunde waren, wie der Theologe Franz Delitzsch und der Orientalist Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876), und nicht zuletzt Schüler. Wie Fleischer verstand er es, mitzuarbeiten und zu helfen, dabei seine eigenen Interessen hintanstellend und einen beachtlichen persönlichen Beitrag

leistend. Der umfangreiche handschriftliche Nachlass in Berlin, der Briefwechsel mit Fleischer in Kopenhagen und manch anderes, was noch verstreut in deutschen oder anderen Bibliotheken liegt, verdient es, erfasst und ausgewertet zu werden als eine wichtige, anregende und hilfreiche Dokumentation für die Geschichte Südsyriens, Ostjordanien und Arabiens in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts wie auch für die Geschichte der orientalischen Studien in Mitteleuropa in dessen zweiter Hälfte.

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# Semitic Studies at the University of Berlin during Wetzstein's Lifetime

*Ludmila Hanisch †*

The idea of investigating Oriental studies at individual universities arose from the observation of various traditions in different countries.<sup>1</sup> Because of the different trajectories of their respective colonial histories, the European countries did not always use the term “Orient” to refer to the same region. They also had diverging topics as the focus of their interest, which they sometimes approached in varying ways. This paper uses the University of Berlin during the nineteenth century as an example of how local traditions at individual universities were able to influence the development and contours of Oriental research.

## 1 The Early Years of the University of Berlin

One of the objectives behind the foundation of the University of Berlin was to provide a replacement for Halle, which had temporarily been occupied by Napoleon's troops.<sup>2</sup> However, Halle, with its distinguished Theological Faculty, was not to be a role model. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, Humboldt's university model placed the Faculty of Philosophy at its epicentre. For this reason, Oriental languages – including Hebrew – were established in the Philosophy Faculty from the outset, though they were sometimes taught by theologians. Therefore, an occasional glance at the Theological Faculty will also be taken. The University's founders wanted Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827) from Göttingen to be responsible for Oriental studies, but he preferred to stay where he was. One of the reasons for Eichhorn's appointment was that, in addition to his theological writing, he had also published in the fields of history and

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1 Because of the unexpected and untimely death of Ludmila Hanisch in 2015, only some months after our symposium in Berlin, the editors have carefully edited the paper and added references where necessary.

2 See *Idee und Wirklichkeit einer Universität: Dokumente zur Geschichte der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1960, pp. xi and xix.

literary history. For example, he was editor of the serial *Repertorium für Biblische und Morgenländische Literatur* ("Catalogue of Biblical and Oriental Literature").<sup>3</sup>

Instead of Eichhorn, in 1812, Georg Heinrich Bernstein (1787–1860), who taught Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Chaldean (Aramaic) and sometimes Sanskrit, came from Jena. His course offerings appear extensive, but his main interest later turned primarily towards the Syriac language. Bernstein did not stay long in Berlin: he participated in the German Campaign during the Napoleonic Wars (*Befreiungskriege*) and by 1821 was already in Breslau. Some of the courses in Oriental languages were taught by the theologian Johann Joachim Beller-mann (1754–1842), who earned his living as teacher at a famous high school.<sup>4</sup> The astronomer Christian Ludwig Ideler (1766–1846), from the Royal Academy, offered courses in Persian and Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

The influence of Romanticism, which not only idealised medieval Europe but also regarded India, Persia and Egypt as regions in which the ancient myths originated, can be seen in the appointment of the comparative philologist and Sanskrit scholar Franz Bopp (1791–1867) as Bernstein's successor to the chair of Oriental languages. From today's perspective, it seems surprising that at the start of his forty-year tenure, the Sanskrit scholar announced courses in Arabic and Hebrew grammar in addition to his main areas of work. Apart from this, Arabic, Persian and Syriac language courses were offered in the Faculty of Philosophy. Furthermore, the private lecturer (*Privatdozent*) Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889) sometimes taught Chinese, Turkish and Hebrew.<sup>6</sup> Hebrew "antiquities", Quranic exegesis and lessons in Armenian were also occasionally offered. Thanks to a study of the number of students in the first few decades, we know there were sometimes only two for Persian and that interest in other Near Eastern languages was rather low. Hebrew courses always attracted the highest number of students because the language was indispensable for theologians.<sup>7</sup>

3 For his bibliography, see Heinrich Döring, *Die gelehrten Theologen Deutschlands im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: nach ihrem Leben und Wirken dargestellt*, Neustadt a.d. Orla, Wagner, 1831, vol. 1, pp. 127–129.

4 Beller-mann, a recognised theologian and Semitist, was professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at Erfurt University before he was appointed director of the *Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster* in Berlin.

5 His son Julius Ludwig Ideler (1809–1842), natural scientist and philologist, also a member of the Royal Academy in Berlin, offered courses in the Coptic and Egyptian languages.

6 See Hartmut Walravens, "Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889)", in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 23, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 2007, p. 497.

7 For student numbers, see Wolfgang Virmond, *Die Vorlesungen der Berliner Universität 1810–*

With the appointment of Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), whom Friedrich Wilhelm IV had pursued strongly in the hope he would come to teach at the university, the search finally shifted to a renowned exponent of the “nature” of language and its aesthetic considerations. However, Rückert’s work at the University of Berlin was limited to a few semesters, which he wanted to reduce even further. He apparently saw himself more as a poet than as a teacher or lecturer, and in fact it was as a poet that he remained in public awareness.<sup>8</sup>

Richard Gosche (1824–1889) was one of Rückert’s Berlin students. In addition to his interest in European literary works, such as those of Shakespeare, he also dealt with Arabic and Persian poetry because – in the spirit of his teacher – he regarded them as an expression of the essence of the Oriental peoples. We encounter Gosche as a teacher of Arabic, Persian, Syriac and Hebrew poetry and as curator of the Royal Library.<sup>9</sup> When he was offered a professorship at the University of Halle, he stated that he would now be at a university that was materially poorer but with a rich scholarly tradition.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the University of Halle was more than a hundred years older, having been founded in the late seventeenth century, and it had survived the attempts to close it that had begun at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Beginning in 1837, adjunct professor (*Extraordinarius*) Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876) worked in Berlin, offering courses to members of both the Faculties of Theology and Philosophy. Besides Armenian, Chaldean and Coptic, his fields included Persian and Arabic. During a trip to the Middle East in 1852, Petermann – who had been given leave in order to acquire manuscripts – pursued an interest in the region’s various religious sects. In the travelogue he published, he described the Druze, Samaritans, and Mandaeanes “with notes

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1834 nach dem deutschen und lateinischen Lektionskatalog sowie den Ministerialakten, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 2011.

8 King Friedrich Wilhelm IV was not necessarily guided by an interest in Oriental languages when he pursued Rückert’s appointment. He rather wanted to assemble the luminaries of German poetry around him. See Max Lenz, *Geschichte der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*, Halle, Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1910, Bd. II, 3. Buch, 2. Hälfte, p. 16; see also Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Universitätsarchiv (HUB UA), Acta 1456 der KFWU, f. 100–101 about Rückert: on August 2, 1841, Eichhorn wrote to the faculty that Rückert was exempt from the demands of the habilitation process. See also *Der Weltpoet: Friedrich Rückert 1788–1866. Dichter, Orientalist, Zeitkritiker*, ed. Rudolf Kreutner, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2016, pp. 213–216.

9 For Gosche’s time at the Royal Library see also the contribution of Christoph Rauch to this volume.

10 Richard Gosche (1824–1889), a student of Rückert, a literary historian and an Orientalist. He wrote several academic annual reports for the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. On Gosche’s time at the Royal Library in Berlin, see the contribution of Christoph Rauch to this volume.

related to ethnological, historical, philological, and religious studies”.<sup>11</sup> It is perhaps also interesting to mention that Petermann undertook part of his journey with Wetzstein. In particular, after the consul's home leave, Petermann accompanied him back to Damascus and then travelled for another two and a half years in the region. Petermann ended his career as consul in Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

The Arabist and philosopher Carl Nauwerck (1810–1891), who had written on the self-described “Brethren of Purity” (*Iḥwān al-Ṣafāʾ*), a secret group of rational philosophers generally believed to have worked during the heyday of the Abbasid caliphate in the tenth century CE, complemented the course offerings as a private lecturer. He translated parts of their body of thought (*Tuḥfat Iḥwān al-Ṣafāʾ*), in which they appeared to him as adherents of Greek philosophy. In his opinion, Arabic literature contributed “to the knowledge of Arab antiquity” and thus helped humanity to attain and improve general knowledge. Nauwerck was close to the “Young Hegelians” member of the Doctor's Club, in which Karl Marx also participated. He was banished from the university for his political activism in *Vormärz* in 1844.<sup>13</sup>

After Rückert's departure, Fleischer's student Friedrich Dieterici (1821–1903) was able to expand his activities. As a guest professor, for half a century he offered Arabic, Quran lectures, Turkish and Hebrew. He was also interested in Arabic philosophy, and, among other things, published a small work on the *Iḥwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, seeking in it the “essence of Arabic philosophy”. Of course, it is difficult to establish how much of his philosophical work Dieterici included in his lectures.<sup>14</sup>

The Egyptologist Richard Lepsius (1810–1884), who was appointed to the newly created “Professorship of Egyptian Antiquity” in 1846, was one of the pioneers of the discipline. He completed his studies in linguistics and subsequently sought to collect materials establishing the position of ancient Egypt in world history. He became head of the Prussian expedition to Egypt (1842–1845).

11 Julius Heinrich Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, 2 vols., Leipzig, Veit, 1860–1861.

12 Julius H. Petermann put on leave with full salary to take over the provisional administration of consular affairs for the North German Union (Norddeutscher Bund) in Jerusalem (11 January 1868), see *Anstellungen von Professoren und Lektoren, sowie deren Entlassung*, HUB UA, Universitätskurator Nr. 322, f. 202.

13 Besides his specialty in Arabic, Nauwerck had received the *venia legendi* for *History of Philosophy*, see Lenz, *Geschichte*, vol. 11, pp. 73–74.

14 For F. Dieterici, see Paul Brönnle, *Die Staatsleitung: Deutsche Bearbeitung mit einer Einleitung „Über das Wesen der arabischen Philosophie von Alḥārābī“*. Aus dem Nachlasse des Geheimen Regierungsrats Dr. F. Dieterici herausgegeben mit einem Gedenkblatt von Paul Brönnle, Leiden, Brill, 1904.

Lepsius made other trips to Egypt, including on the occasion of the opening of the Suez Canal. During the last years of his life he served as head librarian at the Royal Library.<sup>15</sup>

Whereas the study of ancient Egypt was actively supported, not least because of the opportunity to acquire artefacts for Prussia, in 1848 Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) attempted in vain to establish the study of Jewish history, culture and religion at the university in the Faculty of Arts. He felt this would “lead his people out from behind the barrier that existed between it and the state and society itself”.<sup>16</sup> Zunz’s attempts met with as little success, as did later efforts during the nineteenth century. They were rejected on the grounds that the university was not responsible for the training of rabbis. His understanding of religion aroused the anger of the Orientalist Paul de Lagarde, who authored polemics specifically directed against Zunz.

The wide range of courses in Hebrew continued to be offered, but the “Science of Judaism” was kept outside the university. The private lecturer (*Privatdozent*) Theodor Haarbrücker (1818–1880), who had grown away from Protestant theology, taught at the *Veitel-Heine-Ephraim-Lehranstalt*, alongside his work in the school system and at the university. In his view, a knowledge of the language and history of the Near Eastern peoples was indispensable for the study of the Jewish scriptures.<sup>17</sup> In 1883, the theologian Hermann Strack founded the *Institutum Judaicum* in the Faculty of Theology, seeing this as necessary to the effort to convert Jews to Christianity. As can be seen from its course catalogue, this *Institutum* essentially remained a one-man operation.<sup>18</sup>

A precursor to the form of instruction used in the later-founded *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* (Seminar of Oriental Languages) was introduced by the lecturer Ignaz Pietraszewski (1796–1869), who had previously worked in Russian embassies in the Fertile Crescent region. Having resigned from this

15 Richard Lepsius appointed full professor at a newly established chair for “Egyptian Antiquities” (“des ägyptischen Alterthums”) (21 August 1846), see *Anstellungen von Professoren und Lektoren, sowie deren Entlassung*, HUB UA, Universitätskurator Nr. 322, f. 60; see also *Wegbereiter der Ägyptologie: Carl Richard Lepsius (1810–1884)*, ed. Christina Hanus, Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, 2010.

16 “[...] sein Volk aus der Absperrung von Staat und von der Gesellschaft herauszuführen”. Lenz, *Geschichte*, vol. 11.2, pp. 302–303.

17 Friedrich Theodor Haarbrücker, *Religionsparteien und Philosophenschulen*, vol. 1, Halle, Schwetschke, 1850, pp. 7–9.

18 Ralf Golling, *Das ehemalige Institutum Judaicum in Berlin und seine Bibliothek* [= Schriftenreihe der Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 57], Berlin, Universitäts-Bibliothek der Humboldt-Universität, 1993, pp. 3–9.

employment, from the mid-nineteenth century, he taught the modern Oriental languages Arabic, Turkish and Persian in Berlin.<sup>19</sup>

## 2 The Chair of Islamic Literature

With the creation of the chair of Islamic literature (Mohammedanische Literatur) and Semitic languages by the Ministry of Culture in 1860, Near Eastern languages acquired the same rank as Indo-European studies. The appointment of Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888) from Saxony to the newly established chair met with failure, resulting in Emil Rödiger (1801–1874) from Halle taking up the professorship in 1860. He distinguished himself through his work on Syriac manuscripts and Hebrew linguistics, the basics of which he had learned from Wilhelm Gesenius (1786–1842). He had excellent language skills but little interest in literary studies. He developed what can be designated a “rationalist” approach to his work through his association with Gesenius. One of his students was William Wright, the author of the famous Arabic grammar, who also made a name for himself in Britain by cataloguing Syriac and Ethiopian manuscripts. With Rödiger’s appointment, comparative linguistics came to prevail over the Romanticism-inspired language observation or the attempt to find a proto-language. At the same time, August Dillmann (1823–1894) occupied the chair of Old Testament studies in the Theological Faculty. He had earned a reputation as an expert in Ethiopian studies by advancing the grammatical and lexicographical knowledge of the Ethiopian language.

After the founding of the German Empire and Rödiger’s death, a new occupant of the chair of Islamic literature was to be designated in 1875. The most favoured candidate was Theodor Nöldeke, who remained in Strasbourg.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, members of the faculty convinced those in charge at the Prussian Ministry of Culture of the need for a second chair of Middle Eastern languages, or more precisely of Semitic languages. In the summer, Eberhard Schrader (1836–1908), who had published on cuneiform inscriptions and the Old Testament, was appointed. Schrader’s lasting contribution to the field was his deciphering of Assyrian–Babylonian cuneiform. Due to these efforts, he is

19 Ignaz Pietrawczeski was appointed as lecturer for modern Oriental languages on 5 February 1847, by request from the Faculty of Philosophy, see *Die Anstellung der Professoren und Lektoren 1847–1853*, HUB UA, Acta 1457 der KFWU, f. 1.

20 Some readers will be interested to learn that Johann Gildemeister and Wilhelm Ahlwardt were also among the preferred candidates: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Universitätsarchiv, Acta der FWU, no. 1460, vol. 1–26, *Anstellung von Professoren 1874–1882*, ff. 65–75.

considered the founder of Assyriology in Germany, and he made major contributions to the development of this field in Berlin. Knowledge of cuneiform and epigraphic texts formed an essential basis for work on subsequent archaeological discoveries. His career, which comprised appointments in both the Faculties of Theology and Philosophy, demonstrates how closely research on the Old Testament and the Orient were still joined. This observation also applies to August Dillmann, who is mentioned above. He graduated as a doctor of philosophy, worked as a lecturer in the Philosophy Faculty, and only moved on to theology towards the end of his career.

Although his name did not appear on the list of suggested candidates for Rödiger's successor to the chair of Islamic languages and literature, the ministry favoured Eduard Sachau (1845–1930), but there was resistance to the appointment. One objection was the person himself and his specialisation, but what one dissenter called the “related discipline” also raised a protest. In a separate vote in 1875, the Indologist Weber argued against the appointment of the Semitist Sachau because he felt that Arabic was already adequately represented: Dr Wetzstein has just retired, but three lecturers (Dieterici, Haarbrücker and Franz Praetorius) were successfully working on Arabic. All three taught grammar and classes on interpretation (of the Koran, the *Muʿallaqāt*, and of other Arab authors).<sup>21</sup>

At the time in Berlin, Indology was rather poorly represented in comparison with other smaller German universities – a striking contrast to the early years. Even a cursory look at the Berlin doctoral dissertations shows that during the nineteenth century, there were more than twice as many works on Semitic than on Indo-European languages.<sup>22</sup> The two branches of Oriental philology had increasingly diverged, as the Semitist Franz Praetorius (1847–1927), who taught during the late 1870s as an associate professor (*Extraordinarius*) in Berlin observed.

Genealogical research into language families promoted the separation of Semitic studies from Indology and Indo-European studies. For Iranian studies, this meant the division into Old Iranian studies, Pahlavi studies (Middle Persian) and New Persian philology. In other words, different researchers worked on pre-Islamic Persia – i.e. before the adoption of the Arabic script – and “New Persian”. It was not until the end of the century that applications and efforts

21 Letter from Weber of 3 July 1875, HUB UA, Acta der FWU, no. 1460, vol. 1–26. (= Microfiche); HUB UA, *Anstellung von Professoren 1874–1885*, f. 38.

22 This rough outline is based on *Verzeichnis der Berliner Universitätschriften 1810–1885. Nebst einem Anhang enthaltend die ausserordentlichen und Ehren-Promotionen*, ed. Wilhelm Erman, Hildesheim, Olms 1973 (reprint of the Berlin edition, 1899).

to establish a connection between Iranian philology and the Indo-European languages met with success in Berlin. Until that time, Persian had rarely been offered. A look at the outline for Iranian philology that appeared from 1895 to 1904 confirmed this impression: the authors – with the exception of the Indologist Karl Geldner – were from universities outside the capital.<sup>23</sup>

The work of Eduard Sachau shows that, thanks to his studies and knowledge, he was in a position to assume the task of integrating Persian adequately into the curriculum for Islamic literature. This was emphasised by his colleague August Dillmann in the proposal to bring Sachau into the Academy of Sciences: the latter's edition of al-Bīrūnī's chronology of the Oriental peoples, written in Arabic, would have been difficult to produce without knowledge of Persian.<sup>24</sup> The desire to undertake comparative linguistic studies between the Semitic and Indo-European languages is found in his work on Pahlavi, whose Aramaic component he investigated. In fact, though, he rarely offered Persian lessons. Moreover, after assuming his work in Berlin, he did not follow up on his publications, which had appeared during his time in Vienna, on the Persian religion.<sup>25</sup>

### 3 The Image of the Orient after the Foundation of the Reich

Anyone seeking an image of the Orient from the contours or elements that had been compiled will find the ancient Oriental languages and ancient Egyptian to have been the primary targets of research at the university in Prussia's capital. The appointment of an Assyriologist such as Eberhard Schrader reinforced this trend. Even Albrecht Weber, who taught Indology, focused on Indian antiquity. In the majority, the specialists worked in the spirit of the studies of Antiquity of the classical philologist August Boeckh (1785–1867), whose approach can be characterised as *Sachphilologie* (material philology) because he included findings from archaeology, numismatics, epigraphy and papyrology. The specialists

23 *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, ed. Wilhelm Geiger et al., two vols., Strasbourg, Trübner, 1895–1901.

24 Bruno Meissner, "Gedächtnisrede auf Eduard Sachau", in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl.*, Berlin, Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1931, pp. 141–144. A bibliography of Sachau's work can be found in Gotthold Weil, "Die Schriften Eduard Sachaus", in *Festschrift Eduard Sachau zum siebenzigsten Geburtstage gewidmet von seinen Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Eduard Sachau, Berlin, Reimer, 1915, p. 114.

25 Eduard Sachau, "Contributions to the Knowledge of Parsee Literature", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 4 (1870) 1, pp. 229–283.

gradually carried the day; they sought greater influence with their work on the most accurate possible reconstruction of Oriental writings and inscriptions.

The philologists considered religions and cultures, but it was primarily physicians who attacked the topics of peoples and anthropological studies. For example, in 1883 the physician Felix von Luschan accompanied the archaeological excavations in Sendschirli (today's Zincirli) in southeast Turkey, carrying out anthropological research, for example measuring head shapes. Plans for a philosophically oriented *Völkerpsychologie* ("folk psychology") and linguistics as taught by the philosopher of religion Heymann Steinthal in Berlin apparently did not gain a foothold among them.<sup>26</sup>

The Neogrammarians, who influenced the philologists in Leipzig, attracted an audience in Berlin only very gradually. The intention of having philology approximate the natural scientific method by examining sound shifts was not a research priority of the Berlin Semiticists. At best, there was interest in works in language history such as those of Jacob Barth (1851–1914), who undertook etymological studies. He had completed his studies in Leipzig with Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer.

Traces of a stronger practical interest in research abroad can be found neither in the catalogue of Orientalist lectures after the founding of the Empire nor after the Berlin Congress of 1878. Only the increased breadth of the offerings suggests a growing importance of these studies.

Scholarly travel across the Mediterranean, which both Sachau and Schrader now undertook, had occurred previously: the names of the Egyptologist Lepsius, the Semitists Dieterici and Petermann and the lecturer Pietraszewski come to mind.

Given the more intensive contacts and the emperor's two visits to the Middle East, this conservatism seems strange. Kaiser Wilhelm II travelled to the Orient for the first time in 1889. His second journey, through the Ottoman Empire, took place nine years later. This was more extensive and he was accompanied by a large entourage.

Only examining the activities of several scientific associations and societies, in which many privateers and merchants were active, corrects the impression of the University of Berlin's lack of interest or total aversion to actual contact with the Orient. Since university members were usually involved in these societies, it is necessary to consider them when creating a profile of Semitic studies in Berlin.

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26 Heymann Steinthal established in 1860 together with Moritz Lazarus the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*. Publication ceased in 1890.

One body was the Prussian Academy of Sciences, of which most of the professors mentioned here were members. As early as 1883, the Academy supported the discovery of the ruins in Sendshirli (Sam'al). Excavations sponsored by the German Orient Committee, founded in Berlin in 1886, began there in 1888. Much longer lived – and more important – was the German Oriental Society, whose excavations commenced in 1898 and have continued intermittently until today. Thanks to generous donations from patrons and from the emperor's private coffers, it was possible to finance excavations and acquisitions for Berlin's museums. One of the most important donors was James Simon (1851–1932). Thanks to him, and many others, it was possible for important collections of Middle Eastern archaeological pieces to be exhibited in the capital.

The main institution, and the one whose foundation was directly due to Germany's overseas interests, was the Seminar of Oriental Languages. Eduard Sachau, considered by his colleagues as the *Spiritus rector* of Berlin Orientalism, was commissioned with its organisation. His correspondence with Friedrich Althoff, who was called the “secret Prussian Minister of Culture”, shows that they coordinated both the plan for the Seminar as well as personnel and salary issues, in consultation with the Foreign Ministry.

In his memorandum of 1886, Sachau, the future director, formulated the tasks of the Seminar's lectures as fundamentally different from the University's educational mission, namely as providing “practice in speaking and understanding the languages of Asia and Africa”.<sup>27</sup>

For this “Venue for the Cultivation of Applied Science” (*Pflegstätte angewandter Wissenschaft*)<sup>28</sup> – as he called it in his opening speech – he took over the organisation and represented the Seminar on official occasions. He delegated the lectures exclusively to the instructors already employed there.

In his eyes, scholars were “connoisseurs” of languages but did not necessarily have to speak them. They worked in the university, editing Oriental manuscripts and instructing students. His image of “Oriental Studies, with the exception of Indology”, as formulated in the title of an essay that he authored for an anthology on German universities, reflected this.<sup>29</sup>

27 Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Rep. 89 (2.2.1.), no. 21531, f. 1, Schreiben an den Kaiser vom 11 April 1886.

28 The acting director described the Seminar at its festive inauguration ceremony as “incubators of applied research” (“Pflegstätte angewandter Wissenschaft”); snippet from *Vossische Zeitung*, in: Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Rep 89 (2.2.1.), no. 21531, f. 16.

29 Eduard Sachau, “Orientalische Philologie mit Ausschluss der Indischen”, in *Die deutschen Universitäten*, ed. Wilhelm Lexis, vol. 1, Berlin 1904, pp. 507–528.

In October 1887, the *Vossische Zeitung* carried a description of the opening ceremony: “In attendance were representatives of the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Culture, the leaders of the University of Berlin and the Orientalists Weber, Schrader, Dillmann, Oldenberg, Brugsch, and Wetzstein.”<sup>30</sup> Not a single one of them taught in the Seminar. Its instructors formed a separate group, and during the ceremony they sat near the stage. The Seminar could have certainly benefited from Wetzstein, who justifiably continued to be a respected specialist. He maintained contacts with the instructors, or at least some of them. It is not known how or whether he commented on the developments in the capital.

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<sup>30</sup> Snippet from *Vossische Zeitung*, see above.

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# Growing Collections and Rising Expectations

## *The Endeavour to Catalogue Manuscripts in Arabic Script at the Royal Library in Berlin*

*Christoph Rauch*

### 1 Introduction\*

Manuscripts played a crucial role in the evolution of Oriental studies in nineteenth-century Germany, and the history of libraries and their catalogues has consequently become part of the intellectual history of Oriental philology itself. The second half of the nineteenth century was a period in which many Oriental manuscripts were acquired for the Royal Library in Berlin (Königliche Bibliothek, today's Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin). Within a period of less than four decades, roughly between 1845 and 1885, its holdings of manuscripts in Arabic script grew from 800 to more than 8,000. This then required significant efforts to make the manuscripts accessible. Extensive cataloguing projects have been started by the 1840s and were completed about 50 years later, when the acquisition of large collections decelerated. This article examines the long history and challenges of the – finally successful – cataloguing projects of Wilhelm Ahlwardt for Arabic and Wilhelm Pertsch for Turkish and Persian manuscripts, and outlines earlier efforts in this endeavour. It is mainly based on the many handwritten lists and drafts of catalogues of Oriental manuscripts from the end of the seventeenth century onwards that are still kept in the archives of the Berlin State Library. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein too was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture<sup>1</sup> to prepare a catalogue of his own collection, a venture which he could not complete.

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1 The full and correct name is *Preußisches Ministerium der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medizinalangelegenheiten* (Ministry of Religious, Educational and Medical Affairs).

## 2 A Brief History of the Collections of Islamic Manuscripts in Berlin<sup>2</sup>

By the time of its formal foundation by the Great Elector Friedrich Wilhelm in 1661, the library already included Oriental manuscripts. The early collection was partly constituted by manuscripts previously in the possession of the scholars Adam Olearius (1599–1671),<sup>3</sup> Theodor Peträus (1630–1672)<sup>4</sup> and Christian Raue (1613–1677).<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the collection of what was now the Royal Library included an estimated 400 or so Oriental manuscripts. A next milestone was the bequest of the scholar Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817). In addition to more than 17,000 printed works and several hundred Western manuscripts, this provided the Royal Library with about 420 Oriental manuscripts, more than the half of them in Turkish. For the most part Diez had assembled them during his time as Prussian ambassador to the Sublime Porte in Constantinople (1784–1790).<sup>6</sup>

The development towards what would later become an outstanding collection of Oriental manuscripts mainly took place in the course of the nineteenth century. The creation of chairs in Oriental studies at various German universities, the concomitant emancipation of Oriental studies from its role as an auxiliary discipline to theology, and not least the foundation of Berlin Univer-

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2 For a more detailed history of the collection, see Thomas Schmieder-Jappe, *Die Sammlung der orientalischen Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin, Logos, 2004; Guido Auster, “Die Orientalische Abteilung”, in *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek 1661–1961: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Horst Kunze et al., vol. 1, Leipzig, Verlag für Buch- und Bibliothekswesen, 1961, pp. 275–317. A good outline of manuscript acquisitions beyond the “big” collections is provided by Johann Klatt, “Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin”, *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 7 (1890) 5, pp. 177–196.

3 Adam Olearius is well-known for his account of his journey to Persia from 1635 to 1639 (*Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung Der Muscovitischen und Persischen Reyse*, Schleswig, Johan Holwein, 1656) and as a translator of Persian poetry into German.

4 Theodor Peträus was a Danish Orientalist who travelled through the Levant and Egypt between 1656 and 1659 and brought back numerous manuscripts. In his studies, he devoted himself not just to Arabic and Persian, but also to the Coptic, Ethiopian and Armenian languages. Forty-four mostly Coptic manuscripts were acquired for the Electoral Library from his estate in 1677.

5 Christian Raue (or Ravius) spent the years from 1639 to 1642 in Asia Minor, where he not only learnt Turkish in a very short time, but also acquired manuscripts. In 1672 he was appointed to a professorship in Frankfurt an der Oder. Numerous manuscripts from his estate became part of the library in 1691.

6 On Diez and his collection, see C. Rauch, “The Oriental Manuscripts and Albums of Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and the Perception of Persian Painting in His Time”, in *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, ed. J. Gonnella, F. Weis and C. Rauch, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2017, pp. 74–117.

sity in 1809 created a need for primary sources, which was met by purchasing large collections of Oriental manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> In particular, during the reigns of the Prussian rulers Friedrich Wilhelm IV (r. 1840–1861) and Wilhelm I (r. 1861–1888), a number of major purchases were accomplished and these left their mark on the character of the collection.<sup>8</sup> The collection of the Austrian Orientalist Aloys Sprenger (1801–1876) was acquired after lengthy negotiations in 1851. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, Prussian consul in Damascus from 1846, sold a first collection of 251 manuscripts to the Royal Library (Wetzstein I) in 1851. A second collection, including forty-six Kufic Quran fragments and about 600 volumes related to Arabic epic tales, comprised 1,962 items and was purchased in 1859 (Wetzstein II). Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876), professor of Oriental philology at the University of Berlin, was supported by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to travel through the Near and Middle East between 1852 and 1855. One of his goals was to acquire manuscripts for the Royal Library. On this journey, he got hold of 732 Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Syriac, Samaritan, and Armenian manuscripts (Petermann I). In Damascus, he was greatly supported in his search by Wetzstein, whose personal contacts allowed Petermann to discover numerous rare manuscripts. Collection Petermann II, acquired in 1870, includes, alongside 760 Islamic items, forty Abyssinian manuscripts. The latter were added in 1873 (Nachtrag Petermann II). The Swedish Arabist Carlo Landberg (1845–1930) spent many years in the Middle East. One of his collections, comprising 1,050 items, was acquired via E.J. Brill in Leiden in 1883.<sup>9</sup> Although

7 For the history of Oriental studies in Germany, see Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, Cambridge and New York, CUP, 2009; Sabine Mangold, *Eine „weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft“: die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2004; on the history of collecting Arabic manuscripts in Germany see also Tilman Seidensticker, “How Arabic Manuscripts Moved to German Libraries”, *Manuscript Cultures* 10 (2017), pp. 73–82.

8 Although not covered in this article, it should briefly be mentioned that the first of the series of vast purchases was the Sanskrit manuscript collection of Sir Robert Chambers in 1842. The context of this acquisition is quite interesting because, first, it was a protracted affair despite the vehement interest of many institutions in getting hold of the collection, and, second, because of the high expectations the vendor had at the beginning and the comparably low price the Prussian government paid at the end. See Schmieder-Jappe, *Die Sammlung*, pp. 10–12. The catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts by Albrecht Weber was also the first printed catalogue in the series *Handschriftenverzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek* in 1853. The acquisition of the Chambers collection and the rapid publication of a catalogue made Germany a leading nation in Indian studies. See Marchand, *German Orientalism*, p. 132 and Albrecht Weber, *Verzeichniss der Sanskrit-Handschriften*, Berlin, Nicolai, 1853, pp. x–xii.

9 Other parts of that collection, which is related to the scholar and dealer Amīn al-Madanī (d. 1898) was sold to Princeton and Leiden University. See Werner Ende, “Medina und seine Bibliotheken in spätosmanischer Zeit: Eine Skizze”, in *Osmanische Welten: Quellen und*

the collections of Eduard Glaser (1855–1908) were not as extensive as the others listed above, they are worth mentioning because they were the first collections from Southern Arabia to enter a Western library. The 264 volumes are the result of his first (1882–1884) and second (1885–1886) journeys to Yemen.

With these, the arrival of large collections, which together with several smaller acquisitions finally found their way into the Ahlwardt and Pertsch catalogues, comes to an end. Right down to the present day, manuscripts have constantly been acquired by the library. Also in later years, the library has profited from the active role many scholars have played for the benefit of its Oriental collection.<sup>10</sup> This article, however, will focus on the cataloguing activities that closely followed and accompanied the nineteenth century's core acquisitions.

### 3 Early Cataloguing Activities

The earliest catalogues of the Royal Library<sup>11</sup> were primarily made for the needs of the library's administration and were not intended for publication. Oriental manuscripts were part of the first catalogue from 1668. Its author Johann Raue (or Ravius, 1610–1679) – the elder brother of the Orientalist Christian – had been appointed as the first librarian in 1661.<sup>12</sup> The Oriental manuscripts were added to this catalogue by Raue's successor, Christoph Hendreich (1630–1702).<sup>13</sup> They include eighteen Hebrew, one Syriac, one Eastern Turkic, twenty-

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*Fallstudien. Festschrift für Michael Ursinus*, ed. Johannes Zimmermann, Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, Bamberg, University of Bamberg Press, 2016, pp. 129–150, here 143–144.

10 Among the Orientalists who sold manuscripts several times or regularly to the library are Oskar Mann (1867–1917), Martin Hartmann (1851–1918), Helmut Ritter (1892–1971) and Oskar Rescher (1883–1972). For acquisitions from after the Second World War to the present, see Christoph Rauch, "Die Erwerbung orientalischer Handschriften an der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg", in *Seit 100 Jahren für Forschung und Kultur: Das Haus Unter den Linden der Staatsbibliothek als Bibliotheksstandort 1914–2014*, ed. Martin Hollender, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 2014, pp. 80–89.

11 Until 1701, when the Prussian ruler Friedrich I attained the kingship of Prussia, it was called *Kurfürstliche Bibliothek* (Elector's Library).

12 Johann Raue, *Catalogus MSSrum Bibliothecae Electoralis Brandenb. Coloniensis anno 1668*, online accessible at <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001EEDB00000000>. An edition of this catalogue has recently been published: *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln an der Spree – Johann Raues Katalog von 1668. Ms. Cat. A 465 der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz mit Signaturennachweisen und Kommentar*, ed. Ursula Winter, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2018. On Johann Raue, see Kurt Tautz, *Die Bibliothekare der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln an der Spree: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek im Siebzehnten Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1925, p. 18 sqq.

13 Tautz, *Die Bibliothekare*, p. 57 sqq.

nine Arabic, twenty-one Persian, ten Turkish, three Armenian, twelve Coptic, three Ethiopian and two Tamil manuscripts. The first autonomous catalogue of Oriental manuscripts in Berlin was initiated in 1696, and shows an awareness of that collection right from the beginnings of the library. Sebastian Gottfried Starcke (1668–1710), a teacher at the *Berlinisches Gymnasium*, compiled it.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1690s, he lived in Hamburg for two years and improved his Arabic as an assistant of Abraham Hinckelmann (1652–1695). He worked on the catalogue until 1705, when he became a professor at the University in Greifswald. Starcke's fragment contains about 200 descriptions on 276 leaves in folio format. Some more descriptions can be found in the catalogue of Samuel Christian Wolf (1779–1801) from 1800. His work is based on Starcke's catalogue and contains descriptions of 362 codices on 206 pages in folio format.<sup>15</sup> However, this catalogue too was obviously not intended for publication. It is written in Latin and arranged according to language, subject and (finally) format. Arabic manuscripts form more than half the contents and are systematically ordered in sub-groups, followed by the descriptions of the codices from other languages. Only occasionally have shelf marks been added later in the margins.

A completely new arrangement of the books and manuscripts of the Royal Library was carried out under the directorship of the Orientalist Friedrich Wilken (1777–1840) with the aim of forming a library that was easy to use for scholars.<sup>16</sup> In this context, several new indices of manuscript groups were prepared, among them a short catalogue of the Hebrew, Arabic, Persian and Turkic manuscripts.<sup>17</sup> Another group not to be left out of consideration are catalogues, either printed or handwritten, which were prepared by the collectors or previous owners themselves. Christian Raue published a sales catalogue of some 400 items from his collection in 1669.<sup>18</sup> Heinrich Friedrich von Diez prepared a catalogue of his personal manuscript collection beginning in 1791, immediately

14 *Manuscriptorum Orientalium imprimis Arabicorum quae extant in Bibliotheca Regia Berolinensi recensio* (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. A 465<sup>a</sup>).

15 *Catalogus Codicum orientalium mss, qui exstant in Bibliotheca regia Berolinensi* (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. A 472).

16 "Auch die Handschriften wurden seit dem Jahre 1818 geordnet, zum Teil neu gebunden, mit Nummern bezeichnet, und die Titel so vollständig, als es damals möglich war, in ein Inventarium eingetragen." Friedrich Wilken, *Geschichte der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1828, p. 164. In 1828, Wilken numbers 4,611 manuscripts (including the Diez collection), 867 of them Oriental.

17 It is dated 1818 and contains 452 numbers. It is part of a volume entitled *Alte Manuscripten-Kataloge* on its back (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. A 473).

18 *Spolium orientis, Christiano orbi dicatum, sive catalogus mssorum orientalium ...*, Kiel, Reumann, 1669.

after his return from Constantinople. His catalogue assembles detailed information on the contents, the context and the authors of the works, alongside translation examples and transcripts from texts, and is rounded out with notes on provenance issues. Diez also added many codicological details, as well as remarks on the quality of the paper, binding, calligraphy and illumination. He later stated that he had never planned to publish this catalogue.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4 The European Perspective

Before looking at the large-scale cataloguing projects in Berlin in more detail, it might be useful to have a quick glance at what was happening in the meantime in other libraries with large Oriental collections.<sup>20</sup> In 1811, in his *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien*, Heinrich Friedrich von Diez complained that European libraries and private collections had accumulated huge numbers of manuscripts, yet nobody was bothering to make their contents accessible to scholars.<sup>21</sup> As Leiden was a central place for Oriental studies in the seventeenth century, the first catalogues for Oriental manuscripts describe the collections of Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) and Jacobus Golius (1596–1667).<sup>22</sup> Another early and ambitious project was the catalogue of Oriental manuscripts of the Vatican made by Giuseppe Assemani. Of the envisioned twelve volumes, only four were printed in Rome, between 1719 and 1728 – these mostly included Syriac but also Arabic works.

19 The entire catalogue comprises more than 850 narrowly written folio pages, about 600 of them pertaining to his 410 Oriental manuscripts. Diez also added several indices. When Diez bequeathed his collection to the Royal Library, he, according to his will, requested that his complete book and manuscript collection was set up in a separate room together with his catalogue. See Rauch, “Oriental Manuscripts and Albums”, pp. 87–89.

20 For a comprehensive survey on early activities in Europe from the seventeenth to early nineteenth century, see Boris Liebrecht, *Arabische, Persische und Türkische Handschriften in Leipzig: Geschichte ihrer Sammlung und Erschließung von den Anfängen bis zu Karl Vollers*, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2008, pp. 49–55. See also Irmeli Perho, “Catalogues of Arabic manuscripts”, in *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Alessandro Bausi et al., Hamburg, Tredition, 2015, pp. 471–473; Anne Berthier, “Codicologie et histoire des fonds”, in *Manuel de codicologie des manuscrits en écriture arabe*, ed. François Déroche, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2000, pp. 364–385, here p. 366 sqq.

21 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien in Künsten und Wissenschaften, Sitten, Gebräuchen und Alterthümern, Religion und Regierungsverfassung aus Handschriften und eigenen Erfahrungen gesammelt*, Berlin, in Commission der Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1811, pp. xiii–xvii.

22 See Liebrecht, *Arabische, Persische und Türkische Handschriften*, pp. 49–50.

Other early catalogues were published for the collections of Paris (1739), Oxford (Uri, 1787) and The Escorial (Casiri, 1760–1770). From this time up to the middle of the nineteenth century, scientific catalogues were written in Latin and focused on the content and classification of manuscripts, neglecting, however, codicological and paleographical information. In addition to the still modest number of catalogues, academic journals provided information on certain manuscripts or collections. The *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques* was published from 1787 onwards in Paris. Here Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) and other scholars regularly presented detailed descriptions of Oriental manuscripts. *The Oriental Collections* was published in London in three volumes by William Ouseley (1767–1842) between 1797 and 1799. Its second volume included a first catalogue of the Oriental manuscripts in the British Museum. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the need for better catalogues was widely felt by scholars, who increasingly relied on original sources rather than travel accounts and other secondary material. Also, libraries that had invested enormous sums to buy large collections had a great interest to make them known to the public. By and large, the size and importance of a collection became part of the scientific reputation of the institution or even nation that owned it. In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, many of the Western collections of Oriental manuscripts produced good-quality, printed catalogues. With the appearance of new catalogues and editions of bio-bibliographical works, such as Gustav Flügel's edition of Ḥağğī Ḥalīfa's *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*, published between 1835 and 1858, it was possible for scholars to gain much more information on the texts and their authors.

In Germany, the catalogues of Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer of the collections in Dresden (1831) and Leipzig (1838) must be regarded as the first publications complying with modern scientific standards. Catalogues were also published of the important collections of Gotha between 1859 and 1892 (by Wilhelm Pertsch, see below) and of Munich between 1866 and 1875 (by Joseph Aumer).<sup>23</sup>

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23 We find in this period other catalogues or published lists of smaller collections in Germany, sometimes amended to catalogues of Medieval European manuscripts. For a complete overview, see Anton Heinen, "Germany", in *World Survey of Islamic manuscripts*, ed. Geoffrey Roper, London, al-Furqan, 1992, pp. 315–365.

## 5 Catalogues of Persian and Ottoman Manuscripts

In 1835, Otto Willmanns<sup>24</sup> was commissioned with preparing a catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts of the Royal Library in Berlin, which was planned to be published in a single volume. He worked until 1839 and produced two drafts. The first (132 pages in quarto) contains the descriptions of about 250 Arabic volumes. This was probably already a more or less finalised version, whereas the second draft containing Persian and Turkish manuscripts (112 pages in octavo) has to be regarded as a much more preliminary work. It is written in German and in a rather careless script.<sup>25</sup> It was a first serious attempt to publish a catalogue of Oriental manuscripts, yet it came to a halt shortly before the period of huge acquisitions began – by this time Willmanns had left the library, for reasons that remain undocumented.

In 1842, Emil Rödiger (1801–1874), a well-known specialist in Persian, who at that time was professor of Oriental studies in Halle, wrote a letter to the Ministry of Culture in Berlin, complaining about the insufficient information available about the manuscript collection of the Royal Library and offering to do the cataloguing work himself.<sup>26</sup> This prompted the director of the library, Heinrich Pertz (1795–1876), to write a statement to the ministry insisting that the cataloguing situation was acceptable and that the only problem was that Willmanns had left and thus the part for the Persian and Turkish manuscripts could not be completed. As he wanted to avoid transporting large numbers of bulky manuscripts to Halle, Pertz did not want Rödiger to do the work but preferred a local colleague instead. Pertz favoured Friedrich Rückert, but because of the latter's frequent absence from Berlin he finally recommended Heinrich Petermann. However, in order to complete Willmanns' work, the ministry decided to commission Rödiger to do the cataloguing of the Persian manuscripts and Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889) to do the Turkish.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Or Wilmans, dates unknown.

<sup>25</sup> The shelf marks in the Manuscript Department are Ms. Cat. A 474<sup>a</sup> (Arabic) and Ms. Cat. A 474<sup>b</sup> (Persian and Turkish manuscripts).

<sup>26</sup> Auster, "Die Orientalische Abteilung", p. 282. Many of the details provided here and later on the cataloguing activities in the Royal Library are quoted from the following files in the Prussian State Archive: *Erstellung von Verzeichnissen der für die Königliche Bibliothek in Berlin angeschafften Bücher. Anfertigung und Führung des Katalogs und der Inventare über die vorhandenen Utensilien*, Bd. 1, 1819–1864 and Bd. 2 1864–1882: GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Vc Sekt. 2 Tit. XXIII Litt. B Nr. 9 Bd. 1–2, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> Heinrich Pertz, *Die Königliche Bibliothek zu Berlin in den Jahren 1842 bis 1867*, Berlin, Schade, 1867, pp. 17–18; *Erstellung von Verzeichnissen der für die Königliche Bibliothek in Berlin angeschafften Bücher*, op. Cit., f. 74.



FIGURE 4.1 Portrait of Emil Rödiger, undated  
UB DER HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN, PORTRAIT-  
SAMMLUNG

From the mid-1840s on, Persian manuscripts were sent to Halle, and Pertz looked forward to seeing the catalogue within a reasonable period of time. A reminder from the ministry in 1852 asked Rödiger to complete his work. Rödiger replied that illness were preventing him from fulfilling his obligation. The ministry issued an ultimatum to Rödiger to deliver his work by November 1854 at the latest. Otherwise another scholar would be asked to do it. Nevertheless, yearly reminders and another deadline five years later elapsed without any result. In 1860, Rödiger left Halle to become professor in Berlin. This gave way to the assumption that Rödiger would work faster. Hence in 1862 Pertz informed the ministry that Rödiger had resumed working on the catalogue,



FIGURE 4.2 Portrait of Wilhelm Schott, undated

but that it was nevertheless impossible to give a fixed date for its completion due to the enormous numbers of manuscripts acquired within the previous decade, especially the many Persian works of the Sprenger and Petermann collection. This state of affairs notwithstanding, one year later the ministry suggested that Rödiger become a consultant for the Oriental manuscript collection at the Royal Library in order to cope with the lack of Orientalists working in the library.

Pertz's yearly reports to the ministry set out the current state of the manuscript-cataloguing projects, reflecting lamentation, hope and even anger, but also the confidence that Rödiger's interest in the material would finally result in the completion of his work. Pertz regretfully realised that other libraries were preparing their catalogues much faster. In the meantime, Rödiger published reports on recent acquisitions of the libraries in Munich and Berlin in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. There he tried to explain why he could not already publish his eagerly awaited catalogue:

although with his move to Berlin work had become easier since he now had direct access to the collection, he simply could not keep up with the speed of acquisitions. Beyond that, some manuscripts proved to be extraordinarily difficult to catalogue as they contained more than 100 different texts.<sup>28</sup> In the end, Rödiger did not succeed in completing the catalogue. After his death in 1875, the Royal Library finally had to buy the draft of the catalogue from his heirs, including the descriptions of about 340 manuscripts. This has remained to this day an unbound convolute of single sheets, paper slips and quires (577 pages in total, c. 22 × 18.5 cm).<sup>29</sup>

Similar problems occurred with the catalogues of Turkish and Arabic manuscripts. Heinrich Pertz, who was director of the library for thirty years, never saw them in print. Wilhelm Schott was a renowned scholar who had studied Oriental languages in Halle and – after teaching two Chinese students there – had later added the Chinese language to his portfolio. As early as 1840 he published a catalogue of the Chinese manuscripts in the Royal Library in Berlin.<sup>30</sup> Schott was a great scholar with broad skills and had been working on the catalogue of Turkish manuscripts since 1844. However, in nearly three decades he never produced descriptions than of about sixty manuscripts – at least that is the only proof of his work that has survived. In 1870, when the collection was

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28 “Der Catalog der persischen Hss., dessen Beendigung Sie wie Andere meiner Freunde dringend herbeiwünschen, schreitet zwar jetzt, wo die zeitraubende Umständlichkeit des Verpackens und Hin- und Herschickens der Hss. wegfällt und die Uebersicht des Gleichartigen und Zusammengehörigen mir sehr erleichtert ist, ungleich rascher vor als früher; aber dafür soll ich ausser den von mir ursprünglich übernommenen 200 persischen Nummern des älteren Bibliotheksbestandes nunmehr ein halbes Hundert seitdem neu hinzugekommene, auch etwa 30 Diez'sche Hss. und ausserdem noch beinahe 300 Bände der grossen Sprenger'schen Sammlung mit verarbeiten! Nur wer aus eigner Erfahrung die eigenthümlichen Schwierigkeiten und Mühseligkeiten kennt, welche mit dem Lesen der oft so nachlässig und undeutlich geschriebenen persischen Hss. verbunden sind, wird den zu solcher Arbeit erforderlichen Zeitaufwand gehörig würdigen und meinen Anspruch auf Geduld und Nachsicht für gerechtfertigt halten, zumal wenn er weiss, wie viel anderweitige Arbeit mir sonst noch obliegt, und wenn er das sogleich vorzuführende Beispiel erwägt, wo ein einziger Band mehr als hundert verschiedene Textstücke enthält, welche nach ihrem Inhalte zu bestimmen und zu verzeichnen waren.” See Emil Rödiger, “Mittheilungen zur Handschriftenkunde”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xvi (1862), pp. 215–234, here 215–216.

29 The shelf mark is Ms. Cat. A 483 (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department).

30 Wilhelm Schott, *Verzeichniss der chinesischen und mandschu-tungusischen Bücher und Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin: Eine Fortsetzung des im Jahre 1822 erschienenen Klaproth'schen Verzeichnisses*, Berlin, Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1840. On Schott, see Hartmut Walravens, *Wilhelm Schott (1802–1889): Leben und Wirken des Orientalisten*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2001.



FIGURE 4.3 Portrait of Wilhelm Pertsch, undated plaster relief  
FORSCHUNGSBIBLIOTHEK GOTHA

much larger, he reported to the director that he had only to revise the catalogue of the Diez collection to complete his work. Although not even close to the finish with his Turkish catalogue, Schott offered Pertz that he could resume the description of Persian manuscripts too, in case it turned out that Rödiger could not manage it.<sup>31</sup> In the end, Wilhelm Pertsch (1832–1899) did the work for both languages. Pertsch was entrusted with the cataloguing work in 1876 by his friend Richard Lepsius (1810–1884), the famous Egyptologist, who had become director of the Royal Library in 1873 as the successor to Pertz.

31 Annual report (Jahresbericht) of the head librarian to the Ministry of Culture, 1871, in *Organisation und Verwaltung der Königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin*, GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Vd. 31 Nr. 2, Bd. 5, 1870–1881, f. 92b.

Pertsch had held the position of a librarian in Gotha since 1855 and became head of the library at Schloss Friedenstein in 1879. He was an experienced scholar and librarian. Pertsch was also a specialist in Sanskrit studies, an obvious advantage with regard to his work on Persian texts. His previously published catalogue of the Seetzen Collection in Gotha was highly appreciated in the scholarly world.<sup>32</sup> Persian and Turkish manuscripts from Berlin had now to be sent to Gotha. Without questioning the achievement of Pertsch, one must admit that he was able to draw on the preliminary works of Schott and Rödiger. For the Turkish manuscripts, Pertsch could also rely on the excellent catalogue of Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, who had described the 250 Turkish manuscripts of his collection in a very detailed manner. These make up half of the number dealt with in the Pertsch catalogue. In contrast to Rödiger and Schott, Wilhelm Pertsch was already an experienced manuscript cataloguer and librarian and could work efficiently. His catalogues of the Berlin collection were published in 1888 (descriptions of 1,098 Persian manuscripts) and in 1889 (descriptions of 514 Turkic manuscripts).<sup>33</sup>

## 6 First Steps in Cataloguing the Arabic Manuscripts

The drawing up of the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts was delegated to the literary historian Richard Gosche (1824–1889), who had studied Arabic in Leipzig with Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888) and later in Berlin with Franz Bopp (1791–1867) and Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866). Gosche had worked in the Royal Library since 1847, from 1851 on as a *custos* (curator). In this year he was commissioned to compile the catalogue of all Arabic manuscripts, with the exception of those which had already been described by Otto Willmanns. As it turned out, Gosche too was not able to complete the catalogue. It must have been a bitter experience for the library director Heinrich Pertz that these important cataloguing projects that he had initiated finally failed. While in the cases of Schott and Rödiger one has to consider that they were external scholars over whom the director had not enough influence, Richard Gosche worked at

32 Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die orientalischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha. Theil 1: Die persischen Handschriften*, Vienna, Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1859; *Theil 2: Die türkischen Handschriften*, Vienna, Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1864; *Theil 3: Die arabischen Handschriften* (vol. 1–5), Gotha, Perthes, 1878–1892; *Anhang*, Gotha, Perthes, 1893.

33 Wilhelm Pertsch, *Verzeichniss der türkischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin, Asher, 1889; *Idem, Verzeichniss der persischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin, Asher, 1888.

the library. But, in fact, this made the situation more difficult. Gosche had academic ambitions, habilitated in Berlin in 1853 and became a professor of literary history there in 1860. Earlier in the same year, he wrote an extensive petition to the Minister of Culture August von Bethmann-Hollweg (1795–1877),<sup>34</sup> in which he expressed his astonishment that he, a young scholar, had been chosen for the cataloguing task without having had any experience in the field. He listed the many other activities he had to carry out as a *custos*: he was responsible for the systematic catalogues of the library's printed holdings for several subjects. Further, he had to supervise the reading room. On some days, Gosche lamented, he had to open and close the security doors for the manuscripts and rare books stacks eighty times within the four-hour period of service. After mentioning several other obligations, he asked how it would be possible for him to simultaneously compile a manuscript catalogue.<sup>35</sup> Another and probably the crucial point which Gosche mentioned in his complaint was again the immense growth of the collection. The enormous number of often unknown works as well as a relatively slow personal work pace resulted in a recurrent need of revision of work already done. Gosche asked to be relieved from the cataloguing for the reason that – according to the instructions for librarians (*Kustodeninstructionen*) – it was not part of his job to produce detailed catalogues on an academic level for publication and that this had always been the task of external and experienced scholars.<sup>36</sup>

The situation escalated when the printing of the catalogue started. Gosche was expected to deliver the content for two printed sheets (corresponding to sixteen pages) weekly. Another three weekly proofs would require up to

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34 Letter of Gosche to the Minister of Culture (Königl. Staatsminister und Minister der geistlichen, Unterrichts- und Medicinalangelegenheiten) Dr. von Bethmann Hollweg from 6 February 1860, SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, *Acta betr. den Custos Dr. Gosche*, No. 1.7<sup>m</sup>, p. 72 sqq.

35 Among other activities, Gosche mentioned a six-week trip to London in 1856 to examine Robert Taylor's (1788–1852) collection of Arabic manuscripts, which was ultimately sold to the British Library. Gosche was also in a poor state of health; several absences from his office due to illness and two longer cure trips (Badereisen) to improve his fragile health are documented in his records.

36 Gosche requested, "... daß die ganze Katalogisierung der arabischen Handschriften nicht als Theil meiner Custodenpflicht anzusehen sei, weil 1. der Wortlaut der allgemeinen Custodeninstruction S. 36 ‚die Kataloge der gedruckten Bücher, Handschriften, Landkarten, Zeitschriften und Musikalien nach den ertheilten und den etwa noch zu trefenden Bestimmungen zu führen‘ nicht die Ausarbeitung umfassender wissenschaftlicher Verzeichnisse für den Druck einschließt, wie denn auch bis dahin nur Gelehrte, die der Anstalt fern standen, diese Arbeit ausgeführt ...". See *Acta betr. den Custos Dr. Gosche*, p. 76.



FIGURE 4.4 Portrait of Richard Gosche  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, HANDSCHRIFTENABTEILUNG, POR-  
TRAITSAMMLUNG

forty-eight additional pages to be corrected. Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930), who worked as an assistant librarian in the Royal Library for a short time from 1859 to 1860,<sup>37</sup> helped with proofreading. However, two years later, in 1862, Gosche left Berlin for Halle, where he was appointed professor for Semitic languages. Despite the ministry in Berlin ordering him to complete the publication of his catalogue before leaving, the catalogue was never published. Still, Gosche's output was impressive. The already printed catalogue sheets comprise 184 pages with 532 catalogue numbers. The descriptions are detailed, collective manuscripts are divided into several numbers (even for the Kufic Qurans), and the first pages of chapters are indicated. The work anticipates many of the features typical of Ahlwardt's later catalogue (see below). Furthermore, Gosche left a box with more than 2,400 paper slips systematically ordered together with a fragment of an index (fig. 4.5).<sup>38</sup>

The immense growth of the library's collections and the urgent need for better catalogues, together with the improved financial situation of the Prussian state after the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), paved the way for a more professional system of librarianship. We have to bear in mind that the total staff of the library was very small and only increased from 18 to 26 in the years 1845 to 1873.<sup>39</sup> The case of Richard Gosche has shown that the working conditions and perspectives in the library were not attractive and motivating for an ambitious scholar at that time.<sup>40</sup> In 1865, the ministry for the first time initiated the establishment of the position of a *custos* exclusively for Oriental manuscripts. Eight years later that position was still vacant and the director Richard Lepsius complained that he could not find an appropriate candidate because of the

37 Nöldeke applied for the position in a letter 22 August 1858. He resigned in 1860. In 1864 Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer recommended Nöldeke to Pertz as the ideal successor for Gosche in the Royal Library and remarked that other libraries were rapidly progressing with their cataloguing projects. See SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta I 9 vol. 4, p. 20, 43 and 94.

38 A copy of Gosche's printed but unpublished sheets of his catalogue is preserved in the Oriental Department with the shelf mark Or. HB D 10 (*Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften der Königl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, [1859]). Gosche's handwritten fragments are preserved in SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. A 477<sup>a</sup>.

39 Eugen Paunel, *Die Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Ihre Geschichte und Organisation während der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte seit ihrer Eröffnung 1661–1871*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1965, p. 236.

40 In 1893 the Prussian government published a decree concerning the so-called *Berufsbeamten an Bibliotheken* (professional academic librarianship). In most university libraries, this put an end to the period of the so-called *Professorenbibliothekare* – university teachers, who (for extra remuneration) worked in the library in addition to their regular tasks at the university. Cf. Uwe Jochum, *Kleine Bibliotheksgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1999, pp. 121–124.



FIGURE 4.5 Box with Richard Gosche's catalogue records  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, HANDSCHRIFTENABTEILUNG, MS. CAT.  
 477A, PHOTO: SIEGFRIED SCHMITT

unattractive salary offered. It was the Indologist Johann Klatt (1852–1903) who was the first to take up the position in 1874.<sup>41</sup>

41 Several Orientalists worked for the library during the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth centuries as assistants for a short or longer time, often without a full-time position. Moritz Steinschneider, for example, who over decades shaped the collection of Hebrew manuscripts and produced a catalogue of the collection, was never a permanent employee. Other Orientalists who worked for the Royal Library were, among others, Karl Vollers, Mark Lidzbarski, Oskar Mann and Ludwig Stern, who later became director of the Manuscript Department. Cf. also Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism: The study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 130–133.



FIGURE 4.6 Portrait of Wilhelm Ahlwardt, reproduction of a lost painting, date and artist unknown

UNIVERSITÄTSARCHIV GREIFSWALD, FOTOSAMMLUNG

## 7 The Completion of the Catalogue for Arabic Manuscripts

It was thanks to Wilhelm Ahlwardt that the cataloguing of the Arabic manuscript collection in Berlin was finally completed. Ahlwardt was born into an established scholarly family in Greifswald. There he studied Oriental philology with Johann Gottfried Kosegarten (1792–1860) and continued these studies in Göttingen with Heinrich Ewald (1803–1875). He received his doctorate in Greifswald and habilitated there in 1857. In order to study Oriental manuscripts, he lived in Paris from 1854 to 1856. From 1856 on he held the position of a

librarian at the university library, a duty he continued for some years even after becoming appointed to the chair of Oriental studies in 1861. Ahlwardt's specific merits as an Orientalist are in the field of early Arabic poetry. He was the editor of several divans of ancient Arabic authors and studies on early Arabic poets, but published important historiographic works as well.<sup>42</sup> He also made preparations to edit al-Isfahānī's *Kitāb al-aġānī*.<sup>43</sup> As a younger scholar Ahlwardt had already planned to publish a history of Arabic literature as his *magnum opus*.<sup>44</sup> The study of a great many Arabic manuscripts would have been a precondition for such a project. In this context, we have to understand Ahlwardt's letter to the ministry in Berlin from 1863, in which he offered to resume Gosche's project for the field of literature. The ministry agreed to the proposal and instructed the library to supply Ahlwardt in Greifswald with the manuscripts requested. Moreover, the ministry, in the person of the Orientalist Justus Olshausen (1800–1882), who was then senior legal secretary of the minister, provided Ahlwardt with detailed instructions regarding the cataloguing standards. These included title, author and dates, *incipit* and *explicit*, chapters and content, and correctness and completeness of the copy.<sup>45</sup>

In 1866, two and a half years later, Ahlwardt reported to the ministry that he had already examined 850 manuscripts containing probably twice as many

42 Among his works are: *Dīwān Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan Ibn Hānī* (part 1, *al-Ḥamrīyāt*), Greifswald, C.A. Koch's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861; *The Divans of the six ancient arabic poets Ennābiga, 'Antara, Tharafa, Zuhair, 'Alqama and Imruulqais*, London, Trübner, 1870; *Sammlungen alter arabischer Dichter*, 1. *El-Acma'ijjāt*, Berlin, Reuther und Reichhard, 1902; *Sammlungen alter arabischer Dichter*, 11. *Die Dīwāne der Reġezdichter Elaġġāġ und Ezzafajān*, Berlin, Reuther und Reichhard, 1903.

43 His preliminary work for that project (38 volumes) is now preserved as part of Ahlwardt's legacy of transcribed manuscripts and drafts in the Oriental manuscript collection of the Berlin State Library.

44 See the introduction to Ahlwardt's edition of *al-Faḥrī fi l-ādāb al-sultānīya* of Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *Elfachri: Geschichte der islamischen Reiche vom Anfang bis zum Ende des Chalfates*, ed. Wilhelm Ahlwardt, Gotha, Perthes, 1860, pp. ix–x.

45 Letter from the Prussian Minister of Education Heinrich von Mühler to Ahlwardt from May 1869, *Acta betr. die Katalogisierung der arabischen Handschriften*, SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta IIIA4, vol. 1, f. 227. Justus Olshausen held his position in the Prussian Ministry of Culture from 1858–1874, following his time as professor for Oriental languages in Kiel and Königsberg. To understand, why the ministry directly instructed the cataloguers of the library, it is good to know that Olshausen was head librarian at the University Library in Königsberg (1853–1858) and was himself a manuscript cataloguer for the Copenhagen collection (*Codices Hebraici et Arabici Bibliothecae Regiae Hafniensis jussu et auspiciis regis enumerati et descripti*, Copenhagen, Schultz, 1851). See Carsten Erich Carstens, "Olshausen, Justus", in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, (1887), online edition, <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd117123323.html>.

works.<sup>46</sup> Given the difficult bibliographical situation at that time and the limited access to relevant books in Greifswald, this was a remarkable result.<sup>47</sup> In his report, Ahlwardt analysed the work he had done so far and subsequently considered the possibilities for the completion of a catalogue of the entire collection. As he was not specifically interested in all subjects, especially in the field of religious studies, he denied aspiring to catalogue the complete collection but admitted that he would accept the task if it were entrusted to him. Nevertheless, he pointed out why he was qualified – mainly that he had already done much of the basic work necessary for the rest of the catalogue. Moreover, he had collected excerpts from twenty-five biographical works with 8,000 articles covering the seventh to tenth Islamic centuries as a kind of supplement to Ibn Ḥallikān's famous biographical dictionary. Ahlwardt regarded such a compendium of later authors as a precondition for successful cataloguing.<sup>48</sup> Finally, according to Ahlwardt, a further prerequisite for a successful catalogue would be the possibility of studying the Paris collection and the handwritten catalogues there. So, if the ministry decided to entrust him with the project, they should come to a decision immediately and provide him with a one-year travel grant to Paris. Ahlwardt further confessed that he would very much like to be employed in Berlin, which would – in his view – simplify matters.<sup>49</sup> He reckoned that ten more years were needed for the work on the remaining parts. Although the collection grew further, and not counting the many years the preparation of the printer's copy required, it was a schedule he actually kept to in the end.<sup>50</sup>

46 Report of Ahlwardt to the minister von Muehler from 14 September 1866, *Acta betr. die Katalogisierung der arabischen Handschriften*, SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta IIIA4, vol. 2, f. 73 sqq.

47 Ahlwardt's first catalogue was published in 1871 with 1,237 entries from the field of literature: *Verzeichniss arabischer Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin aus den Gebieten der Poesie, schönen Litteratur, Litteraturgeschichte und Biographik*, Greifswald, Bamberg, 1871. This work, however, became obsolete with the publication of his *Verzeichniss arabischer Handschriften* from 1887 onwards.

48 A major source for Ahlwardt's cataloguing work was Flügel's edition of the *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, a biobibliographical encyclopaedia that also included information on many of the more recent authors.

49 He was among the candidates for the chair in Berlin after Rödiger left for Halle. See the contribution of L. Hanisch to this volume.

50 The catalogue was published from 1887 onwards in ten volumes: *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften (Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin 7–9, 16–22)*, Berlin, Asher, 1887–1899. In addition, he published two handlists of later acquisitions, which were eventually also incorporated into the large catalogue: *Kurzes Verzeichniss der Landberg'schen Sammlung arabischer Handschriften*, Berlin, Schade, 1885 and

Ahlwardt dedicated many years of his academic career to the cataloguing project. He claimed that – in addition to his other obligations as a university professor – he had spent ten hours a day on manuscripts over a period of 20 years.<sup>51</sup> The final work comprises 10,368 numbers, respectively the descriptions of about 12,000 texts in 6,450 volumes. Ahlwardt's opinion was that a catalogue of such a broad collection as the one in Berlin had to be planned as a "Compendium of Arabic literature". Thus, the main significance of Ahlwardt's catalogue is that it provides detailed information on the contents of the works as well as abundant biographical information on their authors. Whereas in contemporary works we mostly find a separate chapter for multi-text manuscripts, Ahlwardt rigorously followed the classification of the works according to subject, which necessitated the splitting of the descriptions of multi-text manuscripts into several chapters and subsections. Within the subsections, the works are arranged according to author year of death, as was usually the case. Ahlwardt added at the end of each subsection of his catalogue a list of related works, often without having any evidence of a copy at all, sometimes up to 100 titles in length. For a catalogue with the function of an inventory this practice is highly problematic and frequently causes misunderstandings among researchers. Although his focus in cataloguing was clearly on the literary tradition of the Arabs, Ahlwardt also met high standards regarding codicology. A new feature was that he provided not only the paper size but also the dimensions of the text and the number of lines. He was probably also the first cataloguer who consistently quoted the *incipit* and *explicit* for nearly all works he described, thereby showing an awareness for the incompleteness of copies and variants of text. On the other hand, he omitted some information which was standard in most of the other contemporary catalogues, e.g. provenance. He also left aside references to copies in other libraries, as well as to printed editions, claiming that other catalogues were often unreliable and that it was not possible to keep up to date with new catalogues and editions.<sup>52</sup>

In our time, the cataloguing of manuscripts is regarded as being basic research, but for a long time this task was widely seen as a subordinate discipline, a descriptive business of bibliographers. However, the cataloguing done in the nineteenth century deserves to be considered as fundamental research work. On the one hand, huge acquisitions were made by libraries to support

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*Kurzes Verzeichniss der Glaser'schen Sammlung arabischer Handschriften*, Berlin, Unger, 1887.

51 Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss*, vol. 1, p. xx.

52 See Ahlwardt's introduction to the first volume of his *Verzeichniss*, where he describes his concept at length.

3524. 263.  
 Greifswald 8/9 1899.

VORGELEBT  
 15. SEP. 99  
 KÖNIGL. BIBLIOTHEK

Großvater Herr Geheimrat!

Titel und Vorwort zu dem  
 Schriftschatz-Werk erfolgt für  
 mit Freude, mit Imprimatur  
 versehen.

Endlich auch das zum Abschluß  
 gebracht und nun ein Strich  
 gemacht unter die Arbeit  
 von 40 Jahren!

Ihr ergebener  
 Ahlwardt.

III. A. 4. (Vol. 4. <sup>te</sup>)

FIGURE 4.7 Letter of Ahlwardt to August Wilmanns from 8 September 1899:  
 "Endlich auch das zum Abschluß gebracht und nun ein Strich gemacht  
 unter die Arbeit von 40 Jahren!"  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, HANDSCHRIFTENABTEILUNG,  
 ACTA IIIA4D, P. 263

the young academic disciplines of Oriental studies, but on the other hand no reliable encyclopaedias or bibliographies were available to support the cataloguer's work. Ahlwardt's catalogue is regarded as one of the outstanding individual achievements of nineteenth-century Oriental studies.<sup>53</sup> Carl Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, published between 1898 and 1943, would have been inconceivable without the substantial preliminary work of scholars like Wilhelm Ahlwardt.

In the ninth and last volume of his work he looked back on his life as a cataloguer and summed it up:

Ich sehe auf die angestrengte Arbeit eines vollen Menschenalters zurück: die Kraft der Mannesjahre und die Begeisterung im Dienste der Wissenschaft haben sich daran verbraucht und das Alter hat sich darüber eingestellt, um Empfindungen Platz zu machen, die keineswegs erfreulicher Art sind.<sup>54</sup>

He looks back on the strenuous work of a full lifetime that exhausted his vitality and his enthusiasm for the research. In this context, he also speaks about the slights and misrepresentation he suffered on the part of those who were not actually able to judge his work at all. This might be seen as the bitterness of an elderly man disappointed that he had never received the appreciation he deserved for his work and who also had to cope with the personal blows of fate in the form of the deaths of his wife and only son. In a letter to the director of the Royal Library in April 1901, the Orientalist Friedrich Schwally wrote that Ahlwardt's great catalogue had not yet been reviewed in an academic journal and that he intended to do this soon in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*,<sup>55</sup> a promise that he, however, did not keep. More extensive reviews of the catalogue were presented by Oskar Mann in the *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* and by Friedrich Dieterici.<sup>56</sup> After Ahlwardt's death, obituaries were published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* and in the *Journal*

53 His achievements have been described in these words by Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1955, pp. 191–192.

54 Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss*, vol. IX, p. [iii].

55 Letter from Friedrich Schwally to the Royal Library in Berlin from 21 April 1901. *Acta betr. die Erwerbung der arabischen Handschriften-Sammlung des Königlichen Consuls Dr. Wetzstein*, vol. 2 (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta III C 18-2).

56 Oskar Mann, "Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin", *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 7 (1890) 5, pp. 177–196 and 15 (1898) 1–2, pp. 56–58; Friedrich Dieterici, "Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. VII. Band.", *Magazin für die Litteratur des In- und Auslandes*, 57 (1888), pp. 167–169.

of the *Academy of St. Petersburg*, of which Ahlwardt had been a member, but not in German academic periodicals.<sup>57</sup>

We can conclude that Ahlwardt and Pertsch were the right men for the difficult task of cataloguing Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, as they worked according to an elaborate and farsighted concept and, in the case of Pertsch, already had significant experience in the field. The projects of Gosche, Rödiger and Schott, although they were all excellent scholars, failed. Their failure was not only caused by the continuous increase of the collections or because they neglected the cataloguing work in favour of other academic projects, but also because of rising expectations regarding the scope and quality of manuscript descriptions in that period.

## 8 Wetzstein's Failed Cataloguing Project

In 1864, Johann Gottfried Wetzstein was asked by the Ministry of Culture whether he was willing to produce a catalogue of his second collection for a payment of 2,000 thaler within the next four years. Unlike his first collection, this second one had not yet been made public at all.<sup>58</sup> This shows the eagerness of the ministry to make the recently acquired collections known to the community of international Orientalists. The precondition was that he would use the same criteria for the descriptions as Ahlwardt, who had been commissioned with cataloguing poetical works the year before (see above). Wetzstein agreed.<sup>59</sup> The following yearly reports by head librarian Pertz mention that the catalogue was progressing and that Wetzstein regularly worked at the library.<sup>60</sup>

57 Fritz Krenkow, "Wilhelm Ahlwardt", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1910, pp. 553–556; Pavel Kokovcov, "Wilhelm Ahlwardt 1828–1909", *Bulletin de l'Académie impériale des Sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, VI Série IV (1910) 12–18, pp. 1201–1208 (in Russian).

58 The first collection was advertised by Wetzstein himself in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*: Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, "Arabische Handschriftensammlung des Dr. J.G. Wetzstein, K. Preuss. Consuls in Damaskus", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 5 (1851), pp. 277–284.

59 See *Acta betr. die Katalogisierung der arabischen Handschriften*, SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta IIIA4, vol. 1, f. 63.

60 Annual report from the head librarian to the Ministry of Culture from 1869: "Der Dr. Wetzstein hat bis jetzt noch nicht die Katalogisierung des 2ten Theiles seiner früheren Handschriftensammlung beendet, doch dürfte der Abschluss in nicht allzulanger Zeit mit einiger Gewißheit zu erwarten sein." See *Organisation und Verwaltung der Königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin*, GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Vd Sekt. 31 Nr. 2, Bd. 5, 1870–1881, f. 17a.

Suddenly, for the years 1870 and 1871, Pertz wrote: "I don't know of any progression in Wetzstein's work, he has not been seen in the library for a longer time."<sup>61</sup> At this point the library was obviously no longer up to date, for as early as 1869 the ministry had already informed Ahlwardt that he should catalogue all Arabic manuscripts. This decision obviously was not communicated to the library, because nine years later Richard Lepsius was still awaiting Wetzstein's catalogue and sent him a reminder. Wetzstein replied with a remarkably personal account of what had happened: several years earlier, Justus Olshausen, the senior legal secretary at the ministry, had called him to his office. In the presence of Wilhelm Ahlwardt, Olshausen had informed him that he was from then on no longer required to describe the literary manuscripts in his collection. In order to ensure the consistency of the catalogue, this part should be done by Ahlwardt completely.<sup>62</sup> Wetzstein could not believe that two scholars had been working on the same material for years. He also wondered why the consistency of the catalogue was important only for the field of literature. He then realised why manuscripts he had requested be brought to his desk were temporarily in Greifswald – not only literary works but also ones dealing with geography and history. He was especially annoyed because Olshausen – a friend of his – must have known that he was essentially interested in Arabic poetical literature, his favourite reading in Damascus. As Wetzstein adds in the same letter to Lepsius, it was also hard for him because Olshausen had other bad news for him only shortly before the meeting with Ahlwardt: Olshausen saw no chance that Wetzstein would be appointed to become a professor at a university in Prussia. This, according to Wetzstein, had been a promise made by the former minister Bethmann-Hollweg at the time when he had resigned from the consulate in Damascus.<sup>63</sup> The new minister, von Muehler, obviously felt that he did not need to fulfil promises of his predecessor. This information together

61 Op. cit. f. 36b.

62 Letter from Wetzstein to Lepsius from 12 April 1878: "Diese Eröffnung überraschte mich, nicht nur weil es Herrn Olshausen bekannt war, daß ich die Katalogisierung meiner ehemaligen Handschriften-Sammlung gerade ihres poetischen Theils wegen, der in Damask meine Lieblingslektüre gewesen, übernommen hatte, sondern auch und wesentlich deshalb, weil es unverständlich ist, warum eine Ebenmäßigkeit der Kataloge nur bei den poetischen Handschriften wünschenswert erscheint ..." *Acta betr. die Erwerbung der arabischen Handschriften-Sammlung des Königlichen Consuls Dr. Wetzstein*, vol. 2 (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. 111C18-2), f. 908.

63 In 1862 Olshausen wrote to Wetzstein that a state secretary in the ministry was dealing with his academic future, but this obviously only led to the position of a *Privatdozent* (private lecturer) at the University of Berlin. See letter from Olshausen to Wetzstein from 21 August 1862 (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachl. Wetzstein I, Kasten 5, Mappe 0). However, some biographers say that he rejected a chair in Halle that was offered to him.

with the decision relating to the cataloguing work comprehensibly depressed Wetzstein. To Lepsius he wrote in retrospect that he took it as an expression of serious doubts about his academic qualifications.<sup>64</sup>

Wetzstein did not continue his cataloguing and handed his draft over to Lepsius. It should also be noted that the result was not very voluminous – it contained the descriptions of only 104 manuscripts, out of the 1,962 he had to do.<sup>65</sup> His personal account sheds new light on the period after his return from Damascus. Perhaps we have to slightly readjust the image of Wetzstein as we find it in several biographical accounts. There he is more or less described as a respected researcher and well established in Berlin society, a scholar happy to follow his academic interests free from obligations that would have been imposed by a professorship.<sup>66</sup> Obviously, from his own perspective, the return from Damascus was associated with a setback and it was not his first frustration. In earlier years, Wetzstein had been commissioned by the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* to make a translation of the *Sīrat Anṭar* and had signed a contract with its president Rudolf Brockhaus, which was withdrawn in 1858 because of the lack of the financial resources for printing.<sup>67</sup> Wetzstein's difficulties in re-establishing his academic position back in Germany and his rivalry with Ahlwardt in the field of Arabic literature might explain why in later years he could not bring himself to publish editions or translations of the Arab epic works he was so fond of.

64 “Beides zusammen ließ sich nur als der deutliche Ausdruck des Zweifels an meiner wissenschaftlichen Befähigung ansehen!”, *Acta betr. die Erwerbung der arabischen Handschriften-Sammlung des Königlichen Consuls Dr. Wetzstein*, vol. 2 (SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Ms. Cat. III C 18-2), f. 908.

65 *Bruchstück eines wissenschaftl. Katalogs der arab. Hss. der Bibl. Wetzst. II von N.º 314 bis 418*, 1964 (SBB-PK, Oriental Department, Or. HB D 9); digitised copy available at <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001630000000000>.

66 See for example Küchler, who writes: “Wie Humboldt war er weniger dem Zwang eines Universitätsbetriebes angetan ... Vielmehr wollte er seine Sammlungen auswerten und weiterforschen, dabei zugleich sein reiches Wissen auch außerhalb der Universität zur Verfügung stellen.” Gerhard Küchler, “Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Königlich Preußischer Konsul in Damaskus 1848–1862. Orientalist und Freund Alexander von Humboldts”, in *Jahrbuch für Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte*, 29 (1978), pp. 7–24, here p. 18.

67 See Küchler, “Wetzstein”, p. 22.

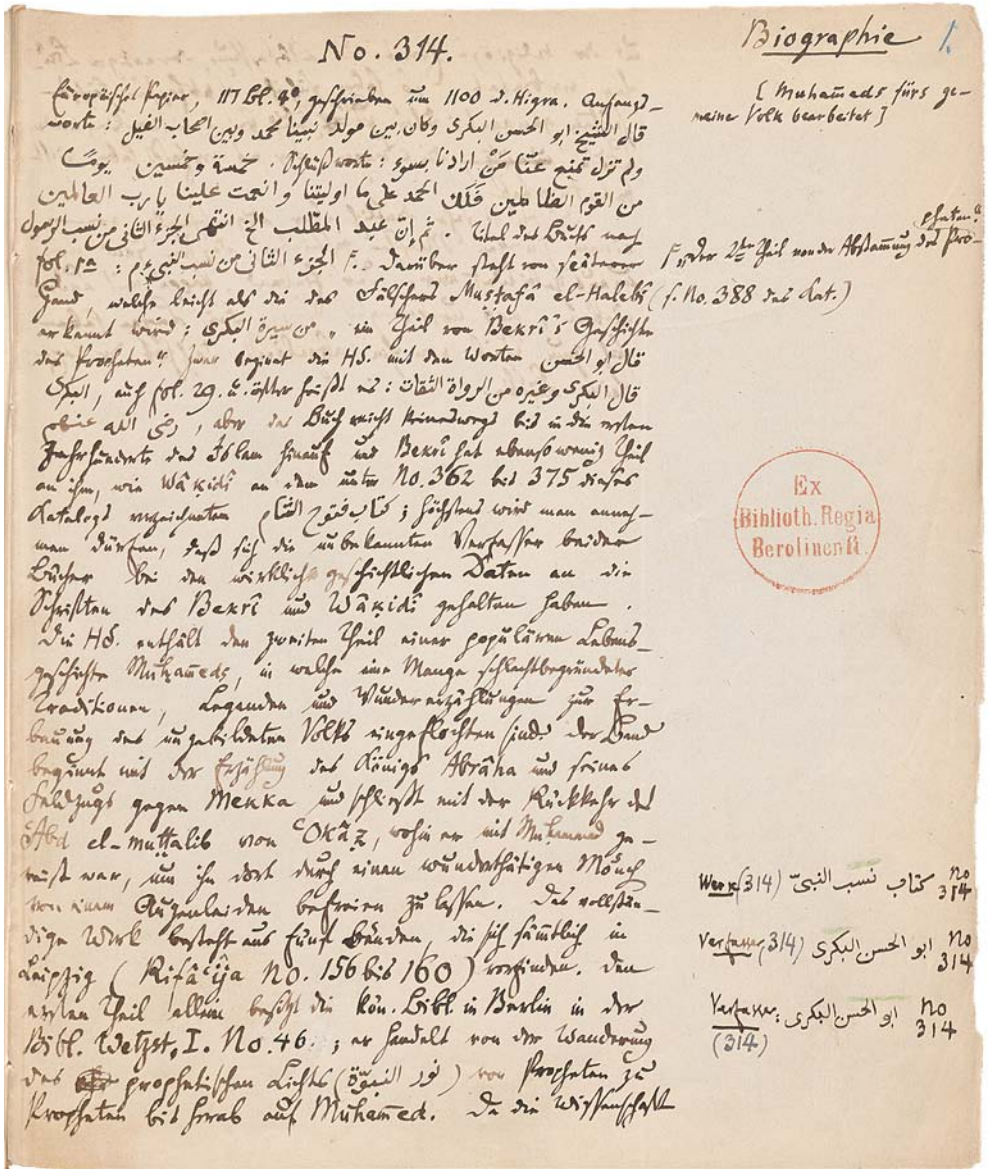


FIGURE 4.8 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, Bruchstück eines wissenschaftl. Katalogs  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, OR. HB D9

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**PART 2**

*The Wetzstein Collections*





# The Wetzstein Collection at Tübingen University Library

*Its History, Content and Reception in Oriental Studies*

Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf

## 1 Introduction

Tübingen University Library owns a collection of manuscripts that was compiled by Johann Gottfried Wetzstein between 1860 and 1862 in Damascus. It is the last and smallest of the four collections that Wetzstein acquired during his stay in Syria and sold to a German library.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, the acquisition of manuscripts had become rather difficult, in particular after the tragic events of July 1860, when many invaluable collections formerly in the possession of Christian families were destroyed. The compilation was rendered possible because the library of a Damascene scholar of Maghrebi origin had become available due to its owner's death. According to Wetzstein, this scholar, a certain "Ahmed ibn Sâlim",<sup>2</sup> was one of the Algerian immigrants that came to Damascus with the former Algerian emir Abd al-Kader (1808–1883) in the 1850s.<sup>3</sup> Part of this library was acquired by Wetzstein in January 1860 and is now integrated into the Tübingen University collection.<sup>4</sup>

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1 I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr Walter Werkmeister, former Head of the Near and Middle Eastern Collection at Tübingen University Library. He has provided me with substantial information about the Wetzstein collection and has freely shared the results of his own research with me. Likewise, I would like to thank Dr Kerstin Strotmann, current Head of the Near and Middle Eastern Collection at Tübingen University Library, for supplying me with additional details concerning the library's manuscript inventories. Last but not least, I would like to thank Irmela Bauer-Klöden at Tübingen University Archive (UAT), who helped me locate archival material concerning the Wetzstein collection.

2 Draft of letter from Wetzstein to Wolff, 21 May 1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w, f. 18.

3 Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, *Catalog arabischer Manuscripte in Damascus gesammelt*, Berlin, Trowitsch, 1863, pp. 1–2. Draft letter Wetzstein to Wolff, 21 May 1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w, f. 18.

4 Wetzstein does not mention where the other manuscripts came from. The only hint he gives is in a letter to Rudolph von Roth in which he mentions a Damascene antique dealer who had provided him with manuscripts before, but without giving his name. Letter Wetzstein to

## 2 The Acquisition

The acquisition of the collection by the university library is well documented – there is a file enclosing the correspondence relating to it as well as a number of letters in Wetzstein’s estate.<sup>5</sup> By going through these documents one obtains a vivid picture of the course of this transaction. According to the university file, the initial impulse for acquiring Wetzstein’s collection came from Philipp Wolff (1810–1894), pastor of the little Protestant parish of Rottweil, a small town about sixty kilometres south of Tübingen.

Who was Philipp Wolff and how did he become involved in this deal? Wolff was not just a pastor but also a well-known Orientalist.<sup>6</sup> He was one of those theologians/Orientalists so characteristic of the period. Like others of his contemporaries, he had studied Oriental languages in combination with (in his case Protestant) theology.<sup>7</sup>

After finishing his studies in Germany, at the universities of Tübingen and Halle, where he not only passed the theological exam (in spring 1832) but also obtained a doctoral degree with a dissertation in the field of Oriental philology in 1834, he went to Paris to complete his studies with the famous French Orientalist Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838).<sup>8</sup>

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Roth, 15 May 1865. UAT 167/280, f. 50. This is a pity, especially with regard to the so-called Kufic manuscripts, which have received much attention in the recent past.

5 UAT, 167/280; SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w; Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 4, Mappe w and Kasten 16 C no. 5.

6 The following biographical account is based on: Wilhelm von Heyd, “Philipp Wolff”, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. XLIV, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1898, pp. 44–45; Emil Kautzsch, “Philipp Wolff”, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 17 (1894), pp. iii–v; Frank Raberg, *Biographisches Lexikon für Ulm und Neu-Ulm 1802–2009*, Ostfildern, Thorbecke, 2010, p. 482.

7 At that time, i.e. in the early nineteenth century, there were almost no positions available for “pure” Orientalists. For that reason, it was a wise if not absolutely necessary decision – with regard to future employment – not to concentrate on Oriental philology alone but to follow other studies as well, which in most cases was theology (Protestant or Catholic). Wolff began his studies at the University of Tübingen, where he enrolled for Protestant theology in winter 1828/29, but left for Halle as early as 1829. There Emil Roediger (1801–1874) and Wilhelm Gesenius (1786–1842) became his most influential teachers.

8 In 1831 Wolff returned from Halle to Tübingen, where he passed the theological examination in the spring of 1832; he then worked for one year as a vicar in Bempflingen, a small village northeast of Tübingen. After that he resumed his studies in Halle, which he completed with a doctoral dissertation. His former teacher Roediger had introduced him to the work of the Arab poet ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Ibn Naṣr Abū l-Farağ Babbagā, from which Wolff edited and translated several poems as his doctoral thesis: Philipp Wolff, *Carminum Abulfaragii Babbaghae Specimen*, Leipzig, Vogel, 1834.

In winter 1835/36, after his return to Germany, he started to teach as private lecturer (*Privatdozent*) of Oriental languages and literature in Tübingen. In the beginning, he obviously cherished hopes of making a living from teaching but soon enough he came to realise that this career offered him few prospects. For this reason he returned to his original calling and took a post as pastor in the parish of Rottweil in 1837/38.<sup>9</sup> But this did not put an end to his interest in Oriental studies. Wolff continued to publish translations of Arabic and Persian literary and poetic works, as well as a study on the Druze religion.<sup>10</sup> However, he was not just a scholar. In 1847, he was able to fulfil a long-held ambition by travelling to the Holy Land, i.e. Palestine. In Jerusalem, he met, among others, Gustav Schultz (1811–1851), then Prussian consul in Jerusalem, with whom he had been acquainted since his time in Paris when both men were studying with Silvestre de Sacy.<sup>11</sup> This first journey (out of three) had a great impact on Wolff.<sup>12</sup> From that time on, Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, became the focus of his studies. He issued a number of guidebook-style publications intended for the instruction of travellers to the Holy Land. The *Arabian Dragoman* is probably

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- 9 The archive files concerning Wolff (personnel files, lists of listeners) clearly indicate this situation. The number of students that participated in his lectures was small; it oscillated between two and four, though in summer 1837 there were 14 students attending his lecture on Goethe's *West-eastern Divan*. He therefore had almost no income from his lecturing. Several times he applied for a raise of his (first non-existent and later rather small) salary. From summer 1836 on he was remunerated with 200 guilders per year, which was doubled to 400 guilders in November 1836. As this was still not enough to support a family, he finally applied, in August 1837, for the post of pastor, which was granted in November of the same year (for a yearly salary of 600 guilders). He took his new office in January 1838. UAT 126/773; UAT 51/732. After his retirement in 1882 he moved back to Tübingen, where he lived with his daughter Lydia until his death. In 1877, in connection with the 400th anniversary of Tübingen University, he was appointed honorary professor of theology.
- 10 These are the following: *Calila und Dimna oder Die Fabeln des Bidpai*, Stuttgart, Scheible, 1837; *Sadi's Rosengarten*, Stuttgart, Scheible, 1841; *Die Drusen und ihre Vorläufer*, Leipzig, Vogel, 1845; *Muallakat: Die sieben Preisgedichte der Araber*, Rottweil, Degginger, 1857.
- 11 Gustav Schultz (1811–1851) spent several years in Paris and after his return to Germany in 1838 pursued an academic career. As a result of a meeting with Friedrich Eichhorn (1779–1856), then Prussian minister of culture, he was appointed vice-consul in Jerusalem in 1842; 1845 he was promoted consul. Philipp Wolff, *Jerusalem nach eigener Anschauung und den neuesten Forschungen geschildert*, Leipzig, Weber, 1857, pp. 204–214; Friedrich Ratzel, "Ernst Gustav Schultz", *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. XXXI, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1891, pp. 704–705.
- 12 A second and third journey followed in 1869 and 1872. The second trip, which he undertook in the company of his family, ended tragically with the death of his wife. It is believed that the third was devoted to visit the grave of the deceased.

his best-known publication – this is a phrase book including an introduction to Arab grammar as well as a basic dictionary.<sup>13</sup>

Wolff was member of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* as well as of the *Deutscher Palästina-Verein* and contributed to the journals of both societies.<sup>14</sup>

How Wolff made the acquaintance of Wetzstein is hard to establish. Wetzstein came to Damascus in early 1849 and returned to Germany in 1862. Therefore, it is hardly possible that they met during one of Wolff's journeys. It is more likely that they became acquainted either through the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* or that they met during one of Wetzstein's home leaves in 1851/52 and 1856/57.<sup>15</sup>

Be this as it may, they were in correspondence from February 1858 and there can be no doubt that they were close friends at the time of the acquisition of Wetzstein's collection by Tübingen University Library in 1864.<sup>16</sup>

The acquisition file starts with a letter from Wolff, dated March 1864, in which he informed Otto von Klumpp (1819–1902) about a collection of Arabic manuscripts that had been put up for sale by the former Prussian consul in Syria and well-known Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein. Pointing out that the collection covered different fields of science, Wolff expressed his opinion that this would be a singular opportunity to expand the rather meagre stock

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- 13 Philipp Wolff, *Arabischer Dragoman für Besucher des Heiligen Landes*, Leipzig, Weber, 1857. This book was well received by the public so that several extended editions followed, a second in 1867 and a third in 1883. Also well-known is his book on Jerusalem, mentioned above, which was also much in demand and published in several editions.
- 14 Wolff joined both societies as soon as they came into existence, i.e. in 1845 and 1877, respectively. With regard to the *Deutscher Palästina-Verein* he was a member of the wider committee. An overview of his articles published in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* can be found in *Generalindex zur Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft Band 1–100*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner, 1955, p. 114. Wolff also published in the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* as well as in theological periodicals such as the *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie*.
- 15 During his twelve years as consul in Damascus Wetzstein was on home leave three times. This was a) from November 1851 until 25 July 1852, b) the summer of 1856 until 7 May 1857 and c) December 1858 until 5 February 1860. Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preussischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): Dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1989, p. 4.
- 16 The legacy of Wetzstein in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin contains a number of letters from Philipp Wolff dating from 1858 to 1882. According to these letters, the correspondence began in February 1858. Until 1862 they addressed each other formally; from 1863 on they called each other “dear friend”. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w; Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 4, Mappe w; Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 16 c Nr. 5.

# Arabischer Dragoman.

## Grammatik, Phrasensammlung und Wörterbuch der neu-arabischen Sprache.

Ein Vademecum

für Reisende in Aegypten, Palästina und Syrien,  
sowie zum Gebrauch für den Unterricht.

Von

Dr. Philipp Wolff.

Zweite, verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage.



Leipzig:

F. A. Brockhaus.

1867.

142-143

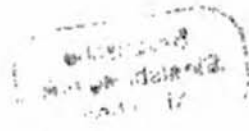


FIGURE 5.1 Philipp Wolff, *Arabischer Dragoman*, 1867, Title page

of the state libraries of Wuerttemberg in this field. Wolff further indicated that the acquisition of this collection would mean a considerable encouragement to Oriental studies in Wuerttemberg and that the price of 2,500 talers asked by Wetzstein was very reasonable. It is interesting to note Wolff's assertion that this collection had not been offered to any other German library.<sup>17</sup> This might be a reference to the Refaiya collection, which had been the subject of fierce competition between interested German and British parties in 1853.<sup>18</sup> He concluded the letter with the request that this matter be brought to the knowledge of His Majesty the King of Wuerttemberg, Wilhelm I (1781–1864).

Otto von Klumpp was at that time the director of the royal reference library at Stuttgart. As it turned out, Wolff's letter (including a copy of Wetzstein's catalogue of the manuscripts) was a good tactical move. Von Klumpp in fact complied with Wolff's request by writing a letter to the king informing His Majesty about the offer and suggesting that this purchase would be highly desirable. Based on von Klumpp's recommendation, the king took an interest in the collection and gave a favourable opinion with regard to its acquisition.<sup>19</sup>

The next step consisted in asking the responsible authorities at Tübingen University – the library committee as well as the academic senate – to express their judgement on this matter.

At that point, Rudolf von Roth (1821–1895) became officially involved. Von Roth had held the chair of Sanskrit since 1856 and was also head librarian at Tübingen University. As head of the library committee, he wrote a detailed report dated 27 April 1864 in which he strongly recommended the acquisition.<sup>20</sup> The academic senate did the same on 12 May, so it was to be expected that the whole matter would soon be settled.

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17 What Wolff did not say (maybe did not know at this particular time) is that Wetzstein had also offered the collection to the British Museum in London through the journalist Max Schlesinger (1822–1881). Draft of letter from Wetzstein to Wolff, 21.05.1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w, f. 18. It would be interesting to know if the British Museum in fact obtained an offer of this kind and, if so, what the response was. There are no letters to or from Schlesinger in the Wetzstein bequest.

18 Boris Liebrecht, "Der Erwerb", in *Refaiya 1853: Buchkultur in Damaskus*, ed. Verena Klemm, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig/Universitätsverlag Leipzig, 2013, p. 24.

19 At the beginning of the negotiations, Wuerttemberg was ruled by Wilhelm I (1781–1864) who died on 25 June. His successor was his son Karl (1823–1891), who ascended the throne on 12 July 1864. With regard to the acquisition of the Wetzstein collection, he apparently shared his father's opinion, with the result that this was one of the earliest transactions of his rule.

20 When Wolff came to Tübingen in March 1864, i.e. about the same time he wrote to von Klumpp, he met Ernst Heinrich Meier (1813–1866), then *ordinarius* for Semitic languages, and Rudolph von Roth, the Sanskritist, telling them about his plan and asking for their

However, it took another six months before the actual negotiations with Wetzstein even began. The fundamental cause of the delay, as the acquisition file clearly shows, was the funding. The university library did not have the necessary resources for the purchase of the collection and therefore had applied to the Ministry of Culture for a grant. The Ministry, however, was not able to provide additional financial support as the state's budget for the following period had just been approved and could not be altered.

By the end of June 1864, it seemed that the acquisition was doomed to fail even before the negotiations had really started. It was only after the Ministry suggested a compromise in mid-July that the whole affair could be pursued. The compromise implied that Wetzstein should be asked to agree to payment by instalments, which would enable the library to finance the purchase through its ordinary budget.<sup>21</sup> Although the academic senate approved of this proposition, another three months passed without further progress, even with Wolff for his part doing anything he could to push the purchase along.<sup>22</sup> It was only in November 1864 that von Roth was finally authorised to enter into negotiations with Wetzstein.<sup>23</sup> At the end of December 1864, the

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opinion. While Meier apparently showed great interest from the very beginning, von Roth's reaction was rather restrained as the focus of his interest was Sanskrit. But although he considered the price too high, he assured Wolff that he would not oppose the acquisition. Letter from Wolff to Wetzstein, 17 March 1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w, f. 16–17.

- 21 Letter from Ludwig von Golther, minister for ecclesiastic and cultural affairs, to the academic senate of Tübingen University, 14 July 1864. UAT 167/280, f. 31.
- 22 Wolff was in contact with Adelbert von Keller (1812–1883), the predecessor of von Roth as head librarian; he further contacted the Catholic theologian Felix von Himpel (1821–1890), from 1856/58 *ordinarius* for Old Testament exegesis and Oriental languages in Tübingen. Wolff seems to have been close friends with von Keller, who obviously provided him with internal information about the circumstances and the progress of the acquisition. Based on this, Wolff told Wetzstein “in confidence” that, in his opinion, von Roth was mainly responsible for the delay. Letter from Wolff to Wetzstein, 12 January 1865. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 16 c Nr. 5, f. 8–9.
- 23 The first official letter from von Roth to Wetzstein is dated 23 November. It is interesting to note that von Roth asked Wetzstein to specify the price, although the library committee as well as the academic senate had already agreed to pay 2,000 talers. It seems as if he intended to obtain a further abatement. This was impeded by the fact that Wetzstein was already informed of the decision of the academic senate (to pay 2,000 talers) by a letter from Wolff, dated 13 November. The letter von Roth addressed to the ministry on 17 December indicates that he was rather surprised (if not annoyed) by this development, wondering who was responsible for this leak of information. Letter from von Roth to Wetzstein, 26 November 1864. UAT 167/280, f. 41. Letter from Roth to the ministry, 17 December 1864. UAT 167/280, f. 44–45. Draft of letter Wetzstein to Wolff, 22 November 1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 16 c no. 5, f. 1.

negotiations were completed<sup>24</sup> and in January 1865 Wetzstein informed Roth that he was about to pack up the manuscripts that he had stored at his Berlin home.<sup>25</sup>

The original collection compiled by Wetzstein contained 173 items. But when he was doing the final review in January 1865, before packing and sending the manuscripts to Tübingen, Wetzstein discovered that item 34 on the list was missing. According to his list it was a small volume of fifty-eight folios containing a tale of the Arabian Nights and was about 100 years old. Wetzstein himself considered this no great loss and promised to replace the missing volume within four months by two other manuscripts of similar or even greater value.

Early in February 1865, the package, weighing 200 pounds, arrived in Tübingen and Roth duly acknowledged receipt. With regard to the payment, the university had changed the arrangements one more time. To avoid the payment of interest, the whole amount was paid at once out of the general budget and was to be repaid by the library over the following years. So Wetzstein received the total amount in a single payment.

The archive file closes with a letter from Wetzstein, dated 15 April 1866, in which he informed Roth that he was, despite various efforts, not able to provide the promised replacements from Damascus or Beirut. For this reason, he sent, enclosed with the letter, two other manuscripts that had been in his possession for some time. Wetzstein did not consider them completely adequate. But as he saw no other possibility of fulfilling his promise, he decided to send them nonetheless accompanied by a bibliographical note.<sup>26</sup>

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24 After having obtained the information about the Tübingen offer (2,000 talers to be paid in five instalments), Wetzstein had asked for time for consideration until 10 December. On 14 December he then wrote to von Roth accepting the offer of 2,000 talers. An interesting point to note is that the original price of 2,500 talers asked by Wetzstein was never seriously taken into consideration. Almost from the beginning the authorities suggested offering only 2,000 talers instead. It is therefore slightly surprising that Wetzstein agreed not only upon the lower price but also on the payment in instalments. Wetzstein remarked that he had never considered this kind of payment as the sum was not high and asked for the payment of interest in compensation. But, nevertheless, he made considerable concessions with regard to the price as well as the payment. The reason why Wetzstein accepted the less than attractive offer is probably to be found in his friendship with Philipp Wolff. Apparently, Wolff was so much interested in the acquisition by the government of Wuerttemberg that he – as Wetzstein's intermediary – had accepted the lower price and Wetzstein, who obviously did not want to embarrass his friend, followed suit. Letter from Wetzstein to von Roth, 14 December 1864. UAT 167/280, f. 43.

25 Letter from Wetzstein to von Roth, 15 January 1865. UAT 167/280, f. 50.

26 As I understand it, these are the two manuscripts Ma VI 174 and Ma VI 175 in Weisweiler's

With this the long process of the acquisition of the Wetzstein collection by the University of Tübingen seems to have come to a late but adequate ending. Yet there are two letters from Wolff to Wetzstein that shed a rather different light on the end of this matter.<sup>27</sup>

Wetzstein had apparently informed Wolff about the loss of manuscript number 34 and his offer to provide a replacement. In response, Wolff on 24 January 1864, i.e. about the same time that the collection was dispatched from Berlin to Tübingen, made the suggestion that Wetzstein should not bother to contact anyone in Damascus but instead send two manuscripts out of Wolff's possession as substitutes. We do not know what Wetzstein's reply to that offer was, but on 20 March Wolff sent another letter in which he enclosed the two manuscripts as well as some articles of his published in *Das Ausland*.<sup>28</sup> According to Wolff's letter one of the manuscripts contained a biography of the prophet Muhammad written in Maghribi script, while the other was a "well written and well preserved" anthology. Whether these were identical with the manuscripts that Wetzstein sent to Tübingen in April 1866 cannot be said with absolute certainty, although there are certain aspects that point in that direction.<sup>29</sup>

In that case the question arises of why it had taken Wetzstein another year to send these manuscripts to Tübingen. The accompanying letter implies that in fact he had first tried to obtain substitutes from Damascus and Beirut. But as manuscripts had become rare and therefore expensive, his efforts had not been successful. In order to fulfil his obligations, he finally acquiesced to send the other two manuscripts, although he did not consider them satisfactory.<sup>30</sup>

### 3 The Cataloguing

A first rather rudimentary inventory of the manuscripts was provided by Wetzstein in 1863. It was not much more than a register written for the purpose of

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catalogue listed under the heading "Nachtrag" and bearing the numbers 169 and 170. Weisweiler, *Verzeichnis*, pp. 127–128.

27 Letters Wolff to Wetzstein, 24 January 1864 and 20 March 1864. SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 6, Mappe w, f. 32–33, 35–36.

28 One of them was about the Wetzstein collection: "Eine neue arabische Manuscripten-Sammlung", *Das Ausland*, 6 (11 February 1865), pp. 135–136.

29 This applies at least to Ma VI 175, which contains – according to Weisweiler – a biography of the prophet Muhammad written in Maghribi script, a fact that coincides very well with Wolff's description. With regard to Ma VI 174, little can be said with certainty.

30 Letter from Wetzstein to von Roth, 15 April 1865. UAT 167/280, f. 56.

the sale and contains a number of more or less serious errors.<sup>31</sup> The entries are in general rather short so that the entire list comprises only seventeen pages.<sup>32</sup> A catalogue complying with academic standards was provided in the early twentieth century. The first volume, covering the first forty-six items, was issued by Christian Seybold in 1907.<sup>33</sup> The second volume, provided by Max Weisweiler, was published in 1930. It covers the rest of the Wetzstein collection, as well as manuscripts that were acquired later.<sup>34</sup> Both Seybold and Weisweiler kept close to the numerical order and the classification provided by Wetzstein.<sup>35</sup>

Christian Seybold (1859–1921) was born in Waiblingen.<sup>36</sup> From 1878 to 1883, he studied Protestant theology at the University of Tübingen, his second focus being Oriental languages. In November 1882, he obtained his doctoral degree at the faculty of philosophy, which was followed by the theological examination in spring 1883. Then he left Tübingen for Spain, having obtained a government-funded research assignment to look for Arabic manuscripts in various Spanish libraries. After his return in the autumn of the same year he started to work as teaching assistant, first in Heilbronn and later in Maulbronn. A fundamental change in Seybold's life occurred when in 1886 Dom Pedro II (1825–1891), then emperor of Brazil, appointed him his academic private secretary. In this position Seybold accompanied Dom Pedro in the following years on his journeys through Europe, supported him in his personal academic studies and interests, and acted as his delegate at the Oriental congress at Stockholm in 1889. After Dom Pedro's deposition in 1889, he shared his employer's exile in Lisbon and Paris until the former emperor's death on 5 December 1891.

31 Seybold calls it a "too short and insufficient sales register (Verkaufsverzeichnis)"; Christian Seybold, *Geschichte von Sul und Schumul: Unbekannte Erzählung aus Tausend und einer Nacht, nach dem Tübinger Unicum herausgegeben* (Ḥadīṭ al-Sūl wa-l-Šumūl), Leipzig, Spirgatis, 1902, p. v.

32 Wetzstein, *Catalog*.

33 Christian Seybold, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen* (Nr. 1–46), Tübingen, s.n., 1907.

34 Max Weisweiler, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen* (Nr. 47–247), Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1930.

35 For this reason, Seybold replaced the lost volume in the catalogue (no. 34) with a manuscript acquired earlier which also contains a tale from the *Arabian Nights*.

36 The following biographical account is based on: UAT 42/21,13; UAT 131/32b; Edwin Henig, *Württembergische Forschungsreisende der letzten anderthalb Jahrhunderte*, Stuttgart, Württembergischer Verein für Handelsgeographie, 1953, pp. 39–40; Walter Riethmüller, *Kaiserfreund und Korankenner: Zum Gedenken an den Orientalisten Christian Friedrich Seybold (1859–1921) aus Waiblingen*, s.l., s.n., 1970; Richard Hartmann, "Christian Friedrich Seybold", *Der Islam*, 12 (1922), pp. 202–206.



FIGURE 5.2 Portrait of Christian Seybold, 1894  
 UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, L XV 483-2

Late in 1892 Seybold returned to Tübingen to take up an appointment as lecturer in Oriental languages at the university.<sup>37</sup> In 1897, he was appointed associate professor and in 1901 he was assigned to the chair for Semitic languages, which he held until his retirement.<sup>38</sup>

37 He is mentioned for the first time in the Faculty and Staff Directory and Course Catalogue in summer 1893.

38 Seybold was the successor of his former teacher Albert Socin (1844–1899), who went to

Seybold's interest in manuscripts from the Wetzstein collection began in the early 1890s, soon after his return to Tübingen. In 1902, he expressed his regret that until then only little attention has been paid to the manuscripts of the Wetzstein collection, although some of them were of unique value. He considered the inventory provided by Wetzstein as insufficient in almost every respect. It seems that this induced him to compile an appropriate catalogue. At that time, the Arabic manuscripts at Tübingen University Library included 220 items, the Wetzstein collection (173 items) being the biggest and most important part of it.

Seybold quit the cataloguing after he had finished the first volume. It was more than twenty years before Max Weisweiler finally completed the project in 1930. He also provided the indices to both volumes.

Max Weisweiler (1902–1968) was born in Cologne and studied Oriental languages at the universities of Bonn, Leipzig and Göttingen before coming to Tübingen in the autumn of 1922.<sup>39</sup> After a year of intense studies with Enno Littmann (1875–1958), he obtained his doctoral degree in November 1923.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent training as an academic librarian took him to the libraries of Cologne, Gotha, Leipzig, Tübingen and finally Berlin. From October 1927 to the spring of 1947 he worked at the State Library in Berlin and was then employed by the University and State Library in Bonn. In March 1954, he was appointed honorary professor at the University of Bonn.

That Weisweiler was assigned to the cataloguing of the Tübingen Wetzstein collection was the result of the intervention of his former teacher, Enno Littmann, who had taken an interest in the collection for some time. It was carried out during his traineeship in Tübingen from April 1926 to April 1927. Due to a fixed deadline as well as financial limitations, Weisweiler had to confine him-

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Leipzig in 1890. His academic work is rather versatile, containing publications on lexicography, geography, biographical works as well as editions of Arabic manuscripts. In 1914, he even edited the letters of Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888) to Konrad Dietrich Hassler (1803–1873) from the years 1823 to 1870. An extended account of his work can be found in the obituary written by Hartmann, "Christian Friedrich Seybold".

39 The biographical account of Weisweiler is based on: UAT 258/20388; UAT 131/585; Richard Mummendey, *Die Bibliothekare des wissenschaftlichen Dienstes der Universitätsbibliothek Bonn 1918–1968*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1968, pp. 107–110; Otto Wenig, *Verzeichnis der Professoren und Dozenten der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn 1818–1968*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1968, p. 331; Beate Wiesmüller, *Das Max-Weisweiler-Archiv der Universitätsbibliothek Leiden*, Leiden, University Library, 2007, pp. 2–10.

40 The archive files show that Weisweiler exclusively attended Littmann's lectures. UAT 258/20388.

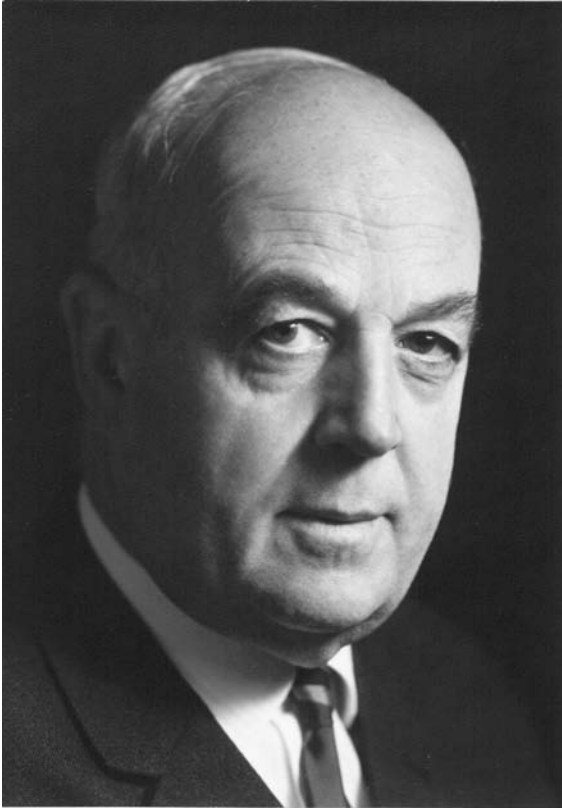


FIGURE 5.3 Portrait of Max Weisweiler, undated  
UB DER UNIVERSITÄT BONN, PORTRAIT-  
SAMMLUNG

self to much shorter entries than his predecessor Seybold and was not able to include all the additional information that he would have liked. Nevertheless, his work is considered to be more methodical than Seybold's. In particular, his references to other catalogues and his Arabic indices of persons and titles add to the value of the work. The catalogue was finally printed in 1930 with the financial support of the Fallati foundation.

The Seybold–Weisweiler catalogue and Wetzstein's list have been digitised and are available on the website of Tübingen University Library.<sup>41</sup>

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41 They do not include the three non-Arabic manuscripts in the collection. These are two Kurdish manuscripts (Ma VI 65, Ma VI 106) and one of Afghan origin (Ma VI 135).

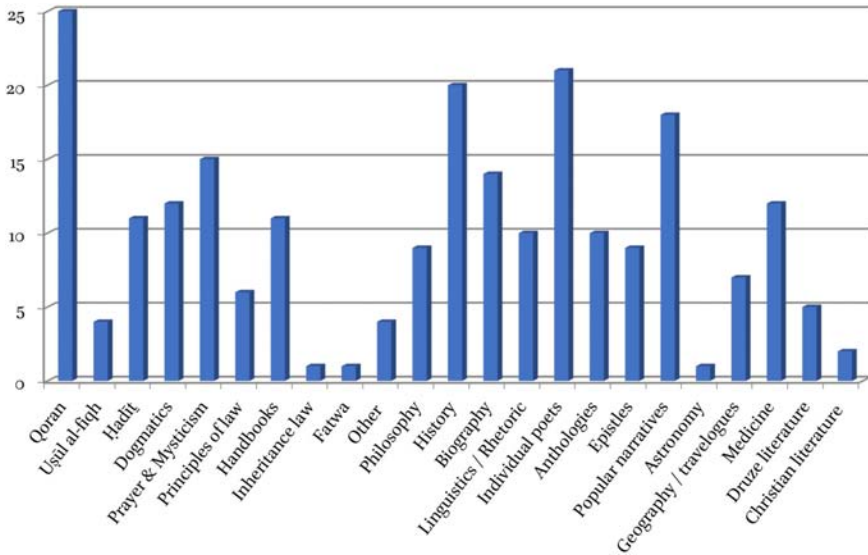


FIGURE 5.4 Diagram illustrating the content of the collection

BASED ON WEISWEILER, *VERZEICHNIS*, PP. 227–228

#### 4 Content and Structure

Wetzstein deliberately compiled his list in order to sell the collection, and it therefore reflects what he thought was of interest and value for a European library. It did not – as with the Refaiya collection – accrue from a native’s interests and needs. This objective becomes evident from what Wetzstein said with regard to the section that he called the “kufic parchments” (Ma VI 147–Ma VI 166, Ma VI 168–Ma VI 172, Ma VI 244<sup>42</sup>). As he considered these to be under-represented in European libraries, Wetzstein put some effort into collecting specimens of this type. His intention was to provide material for further palaeographic research as well as for Quranic criticism.<sup>43</sup> His success is proven by the fact that this section amounts to more than 1,100 folios. With regard to the classification of the manuscripts, Weisweiler provided a detailed, systematic list.<sup>44</sup>

Referring to these entries the following statements can be made. A very large section contains works on religious matters, forty-two items altogether, not

42 Ma VI 244 (no. 217 in Weisweiler’s catalogue) corresponds to number 173 on the Wetzstein list.

43 See also the contribution by F. Déroche to this volume.

44 Weisweiler, *Verzeichnis*, pp. 227–228.

included the twenty-five Quran manuscripts. A second large part of the collection, twenty-three items, is formed by texts on jurisprudence, such as inheritance law and juridical handbooks. Another large division is that called “popular narratives” (*Volksdichtung*), i.e. texts of an entertaining character, which is represented by eighteen items. This comprises some of the most famous manuscripts of the collection, such as the texts of the Arabian Nights, i.e. *Ḥikāyat ‘Umar al-Nu‘mān wa-waladayhi Šarkān wa-Ḍaw’ al-Makān* (Ma VI 32), *Ḥikāyat Qamar al-Zamān wa-Šams al-Zamān* (Ma VI 41) and *Qiṣṣat Ġawdar ibn ‘Umar al-Šayyād* (Ma VI 42), as well as the tale of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (Ma VI 35) and the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* (Ma VI 52).<sup>45</sup> A noteworthy feature of this part of the collection is that five of these manuscripts containing popular narratives (Ma VI 32, 33, 41, 42, 52) once belonged to the famous singer (*qayyim*) Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī, i.e. who was from Aleppo.<sup>46</sup>

45 There is no consensus with regard to the question whether *Qiṣṣat al-Sūl wa-l-Šumūl* (Ma VI 33) forms part of the *Arabian Nights* or not. In the edition of the tale that was published in 1902, Seybold was absolutely positive about it, calling the manuscript the “wohl älteste [...] Handschrift aus 1001 Nacht”. Seybold, *Geschichte von Sul und Schumul* (edition), p. x. In the catalogue that followed in 1907, he expressed himself more cautiously, describing it as a tale “in the style of the *Arabian Nights*” (“Hauptbruchstück eines an die Art von 1001 anschließenden und lose ihr angereihten Liebesromans”). Seybold, *Verzeichnis*, p. 77. This change of opinion might be due to the fact that the well-known Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), in his review of Seybold’s edition, contradicts Seybold’s statement. (“Ich kann Seybold nicht beistimmen, wenn er dies bisher völlig unbekannte Märchen, das er auf Grund einer Tübinger HS aus dem XIV. Jahrh. hier zuerst veröffentlicht, als eine dem Rahmen der 1001-Nacht zugehörige Erzählung betrachtet.”) Ignaz Goldziher, “Geschichte von Sul und Schumul”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 57 (1903), pp. 405–411, here 406. Also, Enno Littmann, in his translation of the *Arabian Nights*, vehemently contradicts Seybold’s suggestion, pointing out the fact that the content clearly indicates the contrary. Enno Littmann, *Die Erzählungen aus den tausendundein Nächten: Zum 1. Mal nach dem arabischen Urtext der Calcuttaer Ausgabe aus dem Jahre 1830 übertragen*, six vols., Wiesbaden, Insel, 1953, here vol. VI, p. 670. Heinz and Sophia Grotzfeld, on the other hand, consider Littmann’s assessment of the tale as “not appropriate”. Heinz Grotzfeld and Sophia Grotzfeld, *Die Erzählungen aus ‘Tausendundeiner Nacht’*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984, pp. 81–82. It probably belongs to the group of tales that in the course of time was integrated into the *Arabian Nights* but did not belong to the original group of stories. The detailed information about this discussion I owe to Dr Werkmeister, whom I thank for this. Seybold dates Ma VI 33 to the fourteenth century, which is very uncommon for this kind of text, as these were articles of daily use and therefore usually soon worn out.

46 The information about the life of Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ is rather scarce. His *nisba* indicates that he was a native of Aleppo and, according to the available information, lived in that city until about AH 1202–1203/1787–89. A sixth Tübingen manuscript that apparently once belonged to Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ is *Tadkirat al-kaḥḥālīn*, a treatise on ophthalmology, which forms part of the composite manuscript Ma VI 138. Boris Liebrecht, “The Library of Aḥmad

But Tübingen University Library is not the only one to own manuscripts formerly belonging to this person. The State Library in Berlin and the University Library in Leipzig both possess as well a number of manuscripts of narrative character that were formerly owned by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī and were sold through Wetzstein. The importance of this individual becomes clear if we look at the total of manuscripts in European libraries that at one time formed part of Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ's personal and lending libraries.<sup>47</sup>

To give an overview of the age of the manuscripts Weisweiler also provided a chronological table.<sup>48</sup> According to this there are seventy-two dated texts ranging from the second half of the twelfth to the middle of the nineteenth century. The oldest dated manuscript is a copy of Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb faḍl al-Qur'ān* (Ma VI 96) from AH 561/1166. The most recent manuscript is a copy of the *Kitāb al-'uqūd al-lu'lu'īyya fī ṭarīq al-sāda al-mawlawīyya* (Ma VI 136), dating from AH 1271/1855. The bulk of the dated texts (twenty-one items) comes from the seventeenth century, followed by the eighteenth century (thirteen texts).

Taken as a whole, the collection that Wetzstein offered for sale in 1864 extended over many different fields of knowledge, thus rendering it attractive for any library. And despite some minor complaints about too few historical works and travelogues, Rudolph von Roth was well aware of the diversity and the value of the collection, especially the parchment section.

## 5 The Reception

Almost immediately after the acquisition, an article that gave an overview of the collection's content was published in *Das Ausland. Wochenschrift für Erd-*

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al-Rabbāṭ: Books and their audience in 12th to 13th / 18th to 19th century Syria", in *Marginal Perspectives on Early Modern Ottoman Culture: Missionaries, travellers, booksellers*, ed. Ralf Elger and Ute Pietruschka, Halle (Saale), Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Regionalstudien Vorderer Orient, Afrika, Asien der Martin-Luther-Universität, 2013, pp. 17–59, esp. pp. 19–21, 31, 55.

47 A first attempt to obtain an overview over the manuscripts formerly owned by Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ with the aim of reconstructing his personal and lending libraries was made by Boris Liebrez. He has listed and examined manuscripts from libraries in Germany (Berlin, Leipzig, Tübingen), Great Britain (Cambridge, London), Syria (Damascus), the United States (Harvard) and Italy (Turin), as well as recently Beirut, Istanbul, Gotha, Munich and Vienna. His investigations clearly show that Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ owned manuscripts of a remarkable variety, not only of the narrative kind. For details, see Liebrez, "The Library", esp. pp. 26–32, 50–55; Liebrez, *Die Rifā'īya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden, Brill, 2016, pp. 228–235.

48 Weisweiler, *Verzeichnis*, p. 225.

und Völkerkunde.<sup>49</sup> It concluded with the wish that this newly found source of Arabic wisdom should attract competent Arabic philologists to make use of it for the benefit of science.

It is not easy to say to what extent this wish has been fulfilled in the decades that have passed since then. The first person who took a serious interest in the manuscripts of the Wetzstein collection seems to have been Seybold. Before his catalogue was published in 1907, he issued three editions based on Tübingen codices, the first in 1894 and another two in 1902.<sup>50</sup>

It seems that Seybold also encouraged his students to use the manuscripts from the Wetzstein collection. In 1901, Hermann Kurz (b. 1876) submitted as his doctoral dissertation a biographical study of al-Suyūṭī based on unpublished source material. For this he used two manuscripts from Berlin as well as the biography provided by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Ša’rānī (AH 897/1492–AH 973/1565), a former pupil of al-Suyūṭī, in his *Dayl ṭabaqāt* (Ma VI 10).<sup>51</sup> In 1926, the well-known Orientalist Richard Hartmann (1881–1965) published a partial edition of Ma VI 7, which he identified as a chronicle written by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ṭulūn al-Šāliḥī al-Dimašqī (AH 880/1473–AH 953/1546).<sup>52</sup>

If we focus on the manuscripts rather than on the authors we can see clearly that the manuscript that has had by far the most attention is Ma VI 32, the tale of ‘Umar al-Nu‘mān and his sons, the so called “Tübingen ‘Umar”. Seybold followed the suggestion of Wetzstein in dating the manuscript to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. More recent research by Claudia Ott, however, has shown that the manuscript originates from the middle of the seventeenth century (around 1640). The most prominent feature of this manuscript is the forty-six

49 This is the aforementioned article written by Wolff.

50 Christian Seybold, *Ġalāl al-dīn al-Sujūṭī’s al-Šamārīḥ fī ‘ilm al-ta’rīḥ: Die Dattelispen über die Wissenschaft der Chronologie*, Leiden, Brill, 1894. [Ma VI 141] *Idem*, *Die Drusenschrift: Kitāb alnoqaṭ waldawāir: Das Buch der Punkte und Kreise*, Kirchhain, Schmersow, 1902. [Ma VI 133] *Idem*, *Geschichte von Sul und Schumul* (edition). [Ma VI 33] In the same year as the edition, Seybold also published a translation of the tale. Seybold, *Geschichte von Sul und Schumul: Unbekannte Erzählung aus Tausend und einer Nacht, aus dem Arabischen übersetzt*, Leipzig, Spingatis, 1902.

51 Hermann Kurz, *Galāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī nach ungedruckten Quellen*, unpublished thesis, Tübingen, 1907. [Tübingen Ma VI 10] The translation of *Sūl and Šumūl* which Kurz intended was never published as far as I know. The files concerning him are UAT 40/123,141 and UAT 131/51 b Nr. 8.

52 Richard Hartmann, *Das Tübinger Fragment der Chronik des Ibn Ṭulūn*, Berlin, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1926. [Tübingen Ma VI 7] He had already published: “Politische Geschichte des Mamlukenreiches: Kapitel 5 und 6 des Staatshandbuchs Faḍlallāh al-‘Omarī’s”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 70 (1916), pp. 1–40. [Tübingen Ma VI 28].



FIGURE 5.5 *Kitāb al-nuqaṭ wa-l-dawā'ir*, c. 17th century  
 UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, MA VI 133, F. 54A

قَائِمًا لَمَّا وَدَّعَ أَبِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَقْرَابَهُ وَعَمَّهُ سَارًا وَحَدًّا  
 فِي الْمَسِيرِ لِيَأْتِيَ أَيَّامًا لَا يَقْرَأُ فِيهَا قُرْآنًا فَيَتَمَنَّاهُ هُوَ سَابِرٌ  
 وَقَدْ خَرَجَ مِنْ أَطْرَافِ الْمَنِّ وَوَصَلَ إِلَى وَادِي يَبْقَاكُ  
 لَهُ وَوَادِي الْحَجَابِ وَكَانَ فِيهِ صَوْمَعَةٌ رَأَى فِيهَا فِي الْيَهَا  
 وَوَقَفَ بِبَابِهَا وَأَسْتَارَ إِلَى رَأْسِهَا بِهَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ **قوله**  
 أَرَاهِبُ هَذَا الَّذِي رَجَيْتُ دَائِمًا وَلَا رَيْتُ فِي عَيْشِي هَيَّيْ  
 وَوَدَّيْتُ مَا تَحْتَى مِنَ الْبُوسِ وَالْأَدْيِ وَأَسْفَيْتُ مِنْ دَبْلِ  
 الْعَجَامِ عَلَى قَدْرٍ  
 أَجْنِبِي بِمَا أَسْأَلُكَ عَنْهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ حَيْدًا تَقْلِبُ فِي هَيْبٍ قَدِ  
 أَهْلِي تَبَايَعَتْ عَيْنَاكَ فِي عَسَقِ الدَّجَا وَهَلْ سَمِعْتَ أَذْنَكَ  
 قَنَاءَةً لَهَا أَوْ جِدَّ حَيْلٍ إِذَا انْقَرَّتْ لَهَا طَلْعَةٌ رَهْوَانِي  
 فِي سَاعَةِ السَّحْرِ  
 قَنَاءَةً لَهَا طَرْفٌ كَيْلٌ أَرَانَهُ إِلَهَ السَّمَاءِ تَزْهُوَنِي سَائِرُ  
 الشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ  
 شَمُولٌ قَدْ تَمَّهَا النَّفْسُ نَيَابَةً مَقْصِدِي تَوَتَّ بَعْدَهَا فِي حَرِّ  
 نَارِهَا شَمُولٌ

FIGURE 5.6 *Qiṣṣat al-Sūl wa-l-Šumūl*, 14th century

UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, MA VI 33, F. 1A

coloured illustrations, which are quite rare in Arabic manuscripts. According to Ott, it is “the only known manuscript of the Arabian Nights that is illustrated throughout the whole text”.<sup>53</sup> Another important aspect is that this manuscript, together with two others (from Manchester and Paris), presents an independent version of this tale.

It was Rudi Paret (1901–1983) who, in the early 1920s, first took serious interest in this codex. Encouraged by Enno Littmann (1875–1958), he first intended to issue an edition of the manuscript but later had to abandon the idea because of technical as well as financial restraints. Instead he inquired the narrative’s position within the framework of the *Arabian Nights*.<sup>54</sup> Almost at the same time as Paret, the Italian scholar Silvio Guisepppe Mercati (1877–1963), then working at the Biblioteca Vaticana in Rome, showed an interest in the ‘Umar manuscript.<sup>55</sup> Since the middle of the twentieth century, the ‘Umar manuscript has been displayed in three different exhibitions (1956, 1977 and 2004). It has also been the focus of a workshop held in Erlangen in 2010. However, there is still no edition of it.

Another manuscript that has gained the attention of more than one scholar is the very first in the catalogue, Ma VI 1, a history of the Arabs before Islam by Ibn Sa‘īd (thirteenth century). In 1928, Fritz Trummer published a detailed account of the whole manuscript’s content, including a list of the sources used by the author.<sup>56</sup> This was followed in 1975 by the dissertation of Manfred Kropp,

53 Claudia Ott, “Der Tübinger Umar”, in *Handschriften des Mittelalters: Die großen Bibliotheken in Baden-Württemberg und ihre Schätze*, ed. Frank Thomas Lang, Stuttgart, Staatsanzeiger Verlag, 2007, p. 77.

54 Rudi Paret, *Der Ritter-Roman von ‘Umar an-Nu‘mān und seine Stellung zur Sammlung von Tausenundeine Nacht: Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1927. [Ma VI 32]

55 In August 1925, he wrote to Tübingen University Library asking for a cost estimate of a copy of the manuscript. In the answer to this inquiry the librarian informed him that the costs would amount to 200 Reichsmark and told him about Paret’s work. What became of Mercati’s request I cannot tell as there are no more files referring to this issue. UAT 167/288, f. 20.

56 Fritz Trummer (born 20 September 1902) enrolled for Protestant theology and Oriental philology at the University of Muenster/Westphalia in the winter of 1921. In 1927, he passed his examinations and published a doctoral thesis: *Ibn Sa‘īd’s Geschichte der vorislamischen Araber*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1928. [Ma VI 141] UAM Akte 65 Nr. 2389. It was his teacher Franz Taeschner (1888–1967) who had suggested this topic. Taeschner later published based on Tübingen Ma VI 137: “Die islamischen Futuwabünde: Das Problem ihrer Entstehung und die Grundlinien ihrer Geschichte”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 87 (1934), pp. 6–49. The same manuscript was used by Paul Kahle for: *Die Futuwwa-Bündnisse des Kalifen En Nāsir (gest. 622/1225)*, Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1932. UAT 167/288, f. 490, 496.

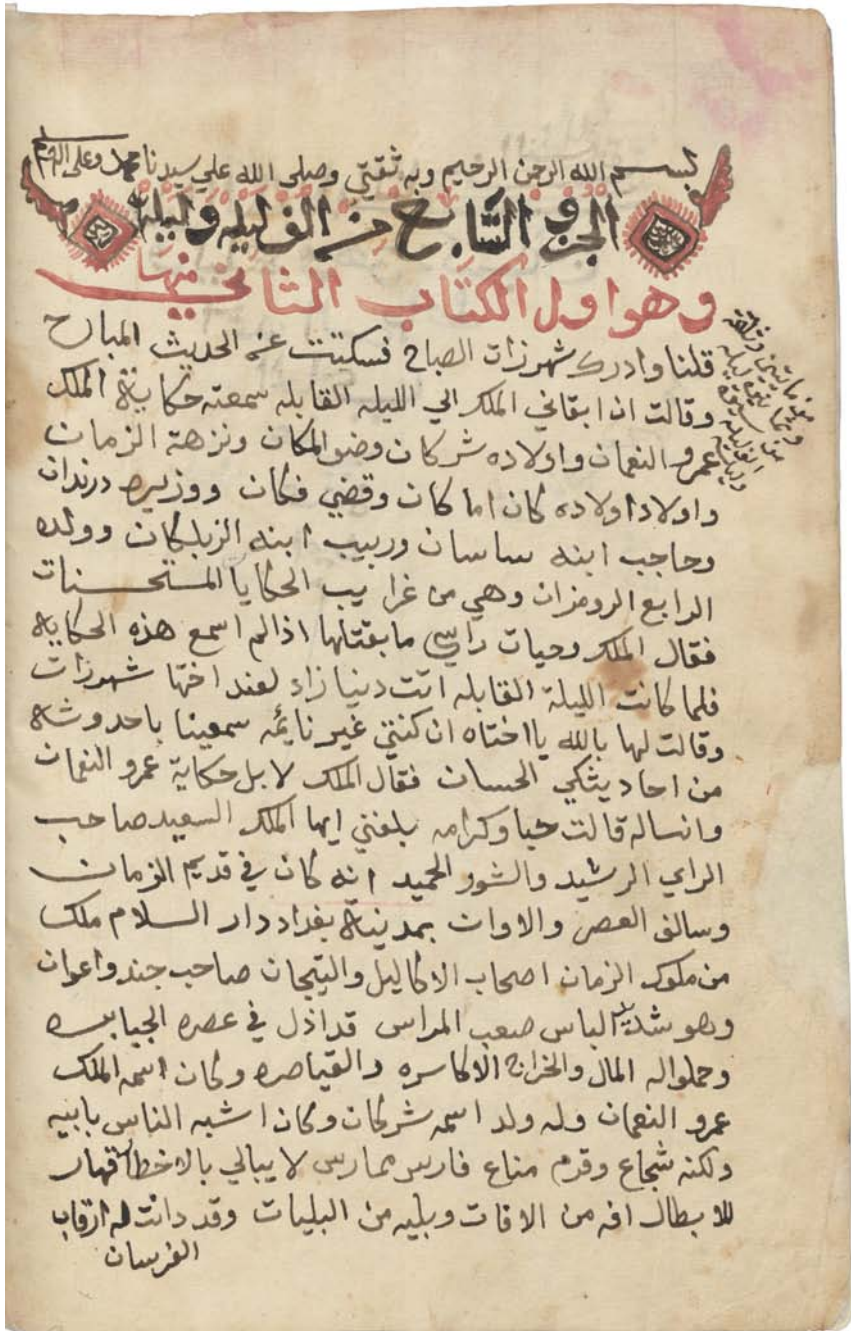
FIGURE 5.7 *Hikāyat 'Umar al-Nu'mān wa-waladayhi Šarkān wa-Ḍau' al-Makān*, c. 1640



FIGURE 5.8 *Hikāyat 'Umar al-Nu'mān wa-waladayhi Šarkān wa-Dau' al-Makān*, c. 1640  
UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, MA VI 32, F. 13A

today professor for Oriental and Semitic studies at the University of Mainz, in which he provided an edition of that part of the codex that deals with the “pure Arabs of the Qaḥṭān tribe”. His study also includes a translation of this text as well as extended remarks on its philological features.<sup>57</sup> The identification of Ma VI 77 as part of Ibn al-Suwaīdī’s “Taḍkira” as well as a description of the manuscript we owe to Manfred Ullmann.<sup>58</sup> August Müller refers to Tübingen Ma VI 14 in his edition of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a’s (1203–1270) biographical work *‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’* (Cairo 1882). De Goeje made use of the Tübingen codex Ma VI 2 for his edition of the annals of al-Ṭabarī.

The account here does not claim to be exhaustive. Further investigation of the university archive would probably reveal that other people showed an interest in these manuscripts and obtained copies. It seems that the scholarly interest in the manuscripts of the collection was greater in the early twentieth century than in later decades, and that the manuscripts with historical and narrative content have gained more attention than others. This was the situation until the year 2014.

When experts dated the parchment of the Quranic fragment Ma VI 165 to the seventh century, this manuscript as well as the collection overall suddenly became the focus of attention of a broad public.<sup>59</sup> Neither Wetzstein nor Seybold and Weisweiler had any idea about the real age of this parchment but included it with others under the heading “kufic parchments”. It is interesting to note how many more people have shown an interest in the collection since this discovery.

An important step with regard to the availability of the manuscripts was taken in 2010 when Tübingen University Library began to digitise the manuscripts and make them available on the library website. The digitisation has not been done systematically but according to scholarly requirements.<sup>60</sup>

57 Manfred Kropp, *Die Geschichte der „reinen Araber“ vom Stamme Qaḥṭān*, Heidelberg, s.n., 1975. [Tübingen Ma VI 1].

58 Manfred Ullmann, “Die Taḍkira des ibn as-Suwaīdī, eine wichtige Quelle zur Geschichte der griechisch-arabischen Medizin und Magie”, *Der Islam*, 54 (1977), pp. 33–65. [Tübingen Ma VI 77].

59 The investigation of this manuscript was carried out by members of the Coranica project ([www.coranica.de](http://www.coranica.de)) in cooperation with ETH Zurich; the results were published in 2014. It must be pointed out that it was the parchment, i.e. the material written on, which was investigated and dated. A further investigation of the writing material (ink) as well as the written text is not yet finished.

60 In 2010, the total number of Oriental manuscripts in the possession of Tübingen University Library was 1,882; out of these 1,806 were in the most common languages such as Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Armenian, as well as in various Indian languages.

د انما عدوا حسرتا و فلا ولا نغيب ما نزل  
 نزلنا به علم انما النور والليق والافوا  
 دها و ليطا كان سفا مسولا ولا نمنع في  
 لا دم مذخا اننا نرعدوا لاد صر و ليل نيل  
 ا المين نكلوا لحد اننا كان سلفه عطف  
 يتا مدد و هاد لكا مما اوعت ا ليطا ريتا  
 نرا لدمه ولا نعمل منها لبا لها ان نون نلم  
 في جهنم ملونا مد عودا اننا انا كصعد  
 دم باليسر واعدتها املكتها اننا انكم  
 ليعولون وولا عظيمات و لهد كد ونا في  
 هدا انهم انهم لصدد و او ما يديك هم  
 لا لا يهودنا و لو كان صفا اوه كما يقولو  
 زيادنا لا يعولوا لحد ر العبر سسلا  
 و نعلم عما يقولو ر علونا كيوننا نسمع لها  
 لسموتنا لسمع و الا لدم و مر و نهر و ان  
 من عابها لا نسمع بعد هو لحد لا نسمع و ر  
 نعلم انهم انهم كان عظيمنا عودنا و ادا و  
 اننا انما انهم عظيمنا نيل و بينا لحد نزلنا و  
 نصورها لا عدو عانا مسعودنا و عظيمنا  
 و لو هم انهم انهم انهم و انهم و  
 حوا و ادا و حوت و نيل في انهم و نيل

navi  
165

FIGURE 5.9 Quranic fragment (Sura 17, 37-36, 57), 7th century  
UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, MA VI 165, F. 1A

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## The Quranic Collections Acquired by Wetzstein

*François Déroche*

In November 2014, the results of a carbon 14 analysis performed on a fragment of parchment taken from a Quranic manuscript kept in Tübingen University Library made headlines on the internet and aroused much interest beyond the circle of scholars involved in the early manuscript tradition of the Quran.<sup>1</sup> Johann Gottfried Wetzstein would certainly have been delighted to see that one of the manuscripts he brought from Damascus to Germany had received worldwide attention, a tribute for the 200th anniversary of his birth and for his work as Orientalist and book collector. The Tübingen manuscript Ma VI 165 (fig. 6.1) was part of the collection of early Quranic fragments which he sold to the Royal Library in Berlin (today's Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) and to the university library in Tübingen. Wetzstein's activity as a collector is part of a larger history of the investigation on the early textual witnesses of the Quranic text that started in the nineteenth century and in which he played a significant role.

A later description of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus indicates that one of the two smaller buildings found in the courtyard, the Bayt al-Māl, was used as a repository for old manuscripts, which were kept there in order to preserve them.<sup>2</sup> Joseph Sadan has published, under the title "Genizah and genizah-like practices in Islamic and Jewish traditions", a short legal treatise from Ottoman times dealing with the way in which worn-out Quranic codices should be disposed of.<sup>3</sup> The text transmits the opinion of a jurist about the fate of Quranic manuscripts which were no longer in use and shows that solutions akin to a Jewish *genizah* were available for such cases. The concerns are not far from those expressed at an earlier date by al-Subkī and analysed with much insight by Franz Rosenthal.<sup>4</sup> Actually, as we shall see, people who were probably illiter-

1 The information is available on various websites. See for instance: <https://www.commdiginews.com/world-news/middle-east/worlds-oldest-quran-discovered-and-may-be-linked-to-imam-ali-30011/> (accessed 27 January 2019).

2 B. Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment aus Damaskus", *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung*, 4 (1901), col. 384–403, 425–441, 475–488, here 384–385.

3 Joseph Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions: Customs Concerning the Disposal of Worn-out Sacred Books in the Middle Ages, According to an Ottoman Source", *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 43 (1986), pp. 37–58.

4 Franz Rosenthal, "Significant Uses of Arabic Writing", *Ars Orientalis*, 4 (1961), pp. 15–23.

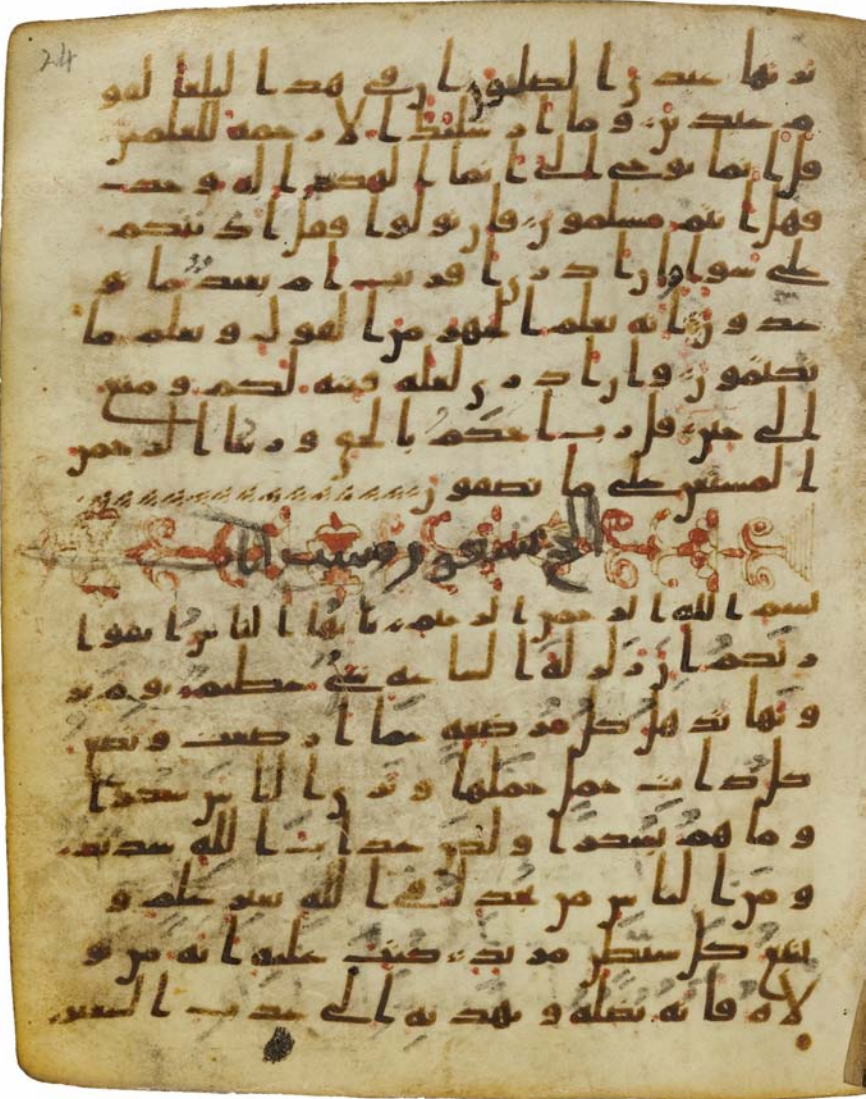


FIGURE 6.1 TÜBINGEN, UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK, MS MA VI 165, F. 24A

ate brought to the Damascus deposit until the nineteenth century items which had nothing to do with the Quran, not even with Arabic, but were covered with writing.

Over the years, various structures in the Islamic world have been reported where worn-out Quranic manuscripts were kept. In addition to the deposit in Damascus, which I shall examine in more detail later, scholars have been aware since the end of the eighteenth century that old Quranic codices were

housed in the 'Amr mosque in Fustat. In 1809, the German traveller Ulrich Jasper Seetzen reported that the folios were heaped up carelessly in a dark room on the north side of the mosque courtyard.<sup>5</sup> Shortly before him, a member of the French expedition to Egypt, Jean-Joseph Marcel, had access to this deposit and acquired a handsome collection of fragments.<sup>6</sup> The collection was obviously known locally before that period and some items were spirited away at an earlier date. Muslim bibliophiles or relics collectors took some material – this is most probably the case for at least one manuscript now in Istanbul<sup>7</sup> – and even Westerners managed to get some samples – notably those which are now kept in the Royal Library in Copenhagen and were acquired during the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> Later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although what remained of the collection was transferred to the Khedivial Library, many folios from Fustat were sold on the market, the latest instance being an auction which took place in Rennes in 2011.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, a second deposit was identified in Tunisia. In 1897, an Egyptian traveller drew attention to the presence in the Great Mosque of Kairouan of a large number of folios kept carelessly in two large cabinets.<sup>10</sup> Before that date, some folios may have entered the antiquity market in both East and West. By the 1920s, the d'Erlanger collection in Sidi Bou Said had, for instance, a few folios from a copy bearing an early tenth-century certificate of endowment (*waqfiyya*) to the Great Mosque in Kairouan,

5 Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten*, ed. F. Kruse, Berlin, Reimer, 1855, p. 389. According to J.J. Marcel, who was probably the first Westerner to visit the place, the leaves were found in a metallic chest by the Mamluk ruler Murād Bey, who was actually looking for treasure which was supposedly buried in the mosque (*Histoire de l'Égypte, depuis la conquête des Arabes jusqu'à la domination française*, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1848, p. 248).

6 Marcel, *Histoire de l'Égypte*, pp. 248–249, n. 1.

7 The copy attributed to 'Uthman, nowadays kept in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, may well have been taken from that deposit at an earlier stage (see T. Altıkulaç ed., *al-Muṣḥaf al-ṣarīf* (in Arabic). *Al-muṣḥaf al-ṣarīf attributed to 'Utmān bin 'Affān* [The copy at the Topkapı Palace Museum], Istanbul, Markaz al-Buḥūṭ al-Islāmīya, AH1428/2007).

8 Mss. Copenhagen, National library, cod. Arab. XXXVI à XXXVIII, XL et XLI (*Codices orientales bibliothecae regiae hafniensis ... Pars altera, codices hebraicos et arabicos continens*, Copenhagen, Schultz, 1851, pp. 40–43). These manuscripts were bought in Cairo in 1626 by Frederic Bockwold (also J.G.C. Adler, *Descriptio codicum quorundam cuficorum partes Corani exhibentium in Bibliotheca regia hafniensi et ex iisdem de scriptura Arabum observationes novae, Præmittitur disquisitio generalis de arte scribendi apud Arabes ex ipsis auctoribus arabicis adhuc ineditis sumta*, Altona, Eckhardt, 1780).

9 See M.C. David (Cabinet d'expertise), *Collection d'un Antiquaire de la première moitié du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Rennes Enchères, 19 September 2011.

10 Muḥammad Bayrām Bey, "Madīnat al-Qayrawān", *Al-Muqtataf* 21 (April 1897), p. 243.

where the bulk of the manuscript is still preserved.<sup>11</sup> Many folios from this deposit, most notably those of the Blue Quran, were seen in auctions in the 1970s and later.<sup>12</sup> They seem to have been stolen when the collection was transferred from Kairouan to Tunis, it returned to Kairouan, where it is now housed in the Musée des arts islamiques. It is not clear whether the bindings later published by Georges Marçais and Louis Poinssot were separated at an early date from the rest of the Quranic fragments for fear that the insects present in the wooden boards would damage the manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> A third deposit was discovered at the beginning of the 1970s in Sanaa, and is certainly the most famous of the four. During restoration work on the roof of the Great Mosque, a cache of parchment and paper folios from early Qurans was discovered between the roof and the ceiling of the prayer hall.<sup>14</sup> The discovery was followed by another in March 2007, about which little information has been made available.

The case of the Damascus collection is more complicated in comparison with the other three deposits of early Quranic manuscripts. In Fustat, Kairouan and Sanaa, a varying proportion of the copies which were kept locally until the moment of their discovery is still there, in Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, in the Musée des arts islamiques in Raqqada or in Dār al-Maḥṭūṭāt in Sanaa. Nothing is left in Damascus, with the exception of a *waqfiyya* from a multi-volume set I shall mention later.<sup>15</sup> Most scholars, for instance Yusuf Éche, were convinced that nothing was left from the old library of the mosque: in his history of the libraries in the Near East in medieval times, Éche came to the conclusion that all the early books present in the Great Mosque had been destroyed by a fire in 1068.<sup>16</sup>

However, it turns out that a large collection had been preserved. The history of its discovery by Western travellers and Orientalists is not completely clear. The purchase of Wetzstein's second collection in 1862 by the Royal Library in Berlin is the first information received in Europe about the Damascus deposit.<sup>17</sup>

11 E. Denison Ross, "Some Rare Mss. Seen in Tunis", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 3 (1923–1925), pp. 614–615.

12 A. George, "Calligraphy, Colour, and Light in the Blue Qur'an", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 11 (2009) 1, pp. 75–125.

13 G. Marçais and L. Poinssot, *Objets kairouanais. IX<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Reliures, verreries, cuivres et bronzes, bijoux*, fasc. 1, Tunis and Paris, Tournier, 1948.

14 P. Costa, "La moschea Grande di San'ā", *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, 34 (1974), pp. 487–506, here p. 487 and 505–506.

15 *Syrie, Mémoire et civilisation* [exhibition, Paris, 14 September 1993–28 February 1994], Paris, Institut du monde arabe, 1993, p. 406 and bibliography.

16 Y. Éche, *Les bibliothèques arabes publiques et semi-publiques en Mésopotamie, en Syrie et en Egypte au Moyen Âge*, Damas, Imprimerie Catholique, 1967, p. 202.

17 J.G. Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek des Dr. J.G. Wetzstein*, 1859 (=

However, acquisitions by Westerners may have started before Wetzstein's time. A factitious volume in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 6140, was part of the important collection which the French Oriental scholar Charles Schefer acquired during the years he spent in the Ottoman Empire as a civil servant for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1843 to 1857.<sup>18</sup> His position was therefore in part similar to that of Wetzstein, who served as consul of Prussia in Damascus between 1848 and 1862. Quranic folios from various periods make up the contents of Arabe 6140. Those on parchment were almost certainly taken from the deposit in Damascus. This is certain for some of them, above all for f. 1–4, and the rest is probably from the same origin.<sup>19</sup> There is no clue as to the date of the purchase: did Schefer buy them when he was serving in Beirut or Jerusalem at the beginning of his career between 1843 and 1846, slightly before Wetzstein arrived in Damascus? Or did he get them when he was in Constantinople, that is to say after 1849?

Scholars quickly became aware of the fragments bought by Wetzstein as the Berlin collection is mentioned in the *Geschichte des Qorâns* published by Theodor Nöldeke in 1860.<sup>20</sup> After this date, travellers to Damascus in search of manuscripts would know that it was possible to acquire old Quranic fragments. The same situation happened in Cairo: after Marcel's visit to the 'Amr Mosque, the dispersion of Fustat fragments during the nineteenth century was intense. Shortly after Wetzstein left Damascus, two Englishmen, Edward Henry Palmer (who was to become later professor of Arabic in Cambridge) and Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake, undertook a journey to the Near East with the support of the Palestine Exploration Fund.<sup>21</sup> Coming from Petra and Jerusalem, they stopped

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Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hs. or. sim. 8947), p. 2 (<http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001795300000000>, consulted 27 January 2019). Wetzstein does not provide complete information about the origin of the fragments.

18 M.R. Séguy, "Fonds arabe: Introduction historique", in G. Vajda and Y. Sauvan, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, II. Manuscrits musulmans*, II, nos. 590–1120, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1978, pp. xiii–xxxii, here pp. xxix–xxx.

19 Paris, BnF Arabe 6140a, see F. Déroche, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, II. Manuscrits musulmans, 1/1, Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 1983, p. 61, no. 6; also, Cambridge University Library, Add. 1125, see E.G. Browne, *Hand-list*, Cambridge, 1900; and <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01125/1> (consulted 27 January 2019).

20 T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, Göttingen, Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1860, pp. vi and 301.

21 The information about Palmer's stay in Damascus is very scanty (see W. Besant, *The Life and Achievements of Edward Henry Palmer, Late Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Saint John's College*, London, John Murray, 1883, p. 109).

in Damascus in 1870 on their way back to Britain through Constantinople. They stayed with the British Consul in Damascus, Captain Richard Burton,<sup>22</sup> who may have helped them in the city. Although there is no clear indication about the provenance of every single item of the Cambridge University Library collection, the evidence I have gathered points clearly to a Damascene origin, with the exception of at least one fragment Palmer and Tyrwhitt Drake acquired in Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup> The collection was bought by Cambridge University Library in 1874.

As said, the worn-out codices and papers were kept inside the Bayt al-Māl. This was not known in the West before the 1870s. A first indication may be found on a plan drawn by the French architect Jules Bourgoïn, who visited Damascus in 1874 or 1875. On his drawing, next to the Bayt al-Māl in the courtyard of the mosque, we can see a caption – “Bibliothèque” (library) – a designation which may refer to the old codices kept in the mosque.<sup>24</sup>

In 1898, Kaiser William II (Wilhelm II) visited Damascus during a state visit. This was an extraordinary opportunity for two German scholars to gain official access to the deposit in the Bayt al-Māl. Bruno Violet, who spent more time there, wrote in the introduction of a paper on his most important find, an Arabic translation of the Psalms in Greek letters, how he was able to work for a whole month, making haste in order to see the largest number of fragments.<sup>25</sup> According to his report, there were at that time many rumours about the collection and the visitors were let in with a show of mystery (indicating that access was possible). Within the building, the fragments were heaped up to the height of a man. Violet saw a majority of Arabic fragments, as might be expected, but he also mentions Greek, Syriac, Samaritan, and even Old French and Coptic.<sup>26</sup> For a while, he was helped in his task by a colleague, Bernhard Moritz.

As the latter was at that time director of the Khedivial Library in Cairo, he may be responsible for the presence in the Cairo Library of a *ǧuzʿ* of the Quran with a binding which was published in 1929 by Adolf Grohmann and containing a *waqfiyya* to the Great Mosque of Damascus.<sup>27</sup> However, it must be stressed

22 Cf. the contribution of Robert Irwin to this volume.

23 Fragment Cambridge, University Library Add. 1130: “From the Haram es-Sherif at Jerusalem”.

24 École des beaux-arts, Musée, no. 8564.

25 Violet, “Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment”, col. 384.

26 Ibid. Pictures of the fragments are available at: <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB000074F100000000>.

27 T.W. Arnold and A. Grohmann, *The Islamic Book: A Contribution to its Art and History from the VII–XVIII Century*, London, 1929, pp. 46–47, pl. 22 b–c (MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub Maṣāḥif 192); Marçais and Poinssot, *Objets kairouanais*, pp. 46–49 and fig. 14.

that some manuscripts circulated even after they were made a *waqf* in a place. A volume travelled from Tarsus – on the southern coast of modern Turkey<sup>28</sup> – and another one from Tyre to the ‘Amr Mosque in Fustat,<sup>29</sup> and other similar cases, are found in the Damascus collection itself. We shall soon see an example of these movements. In any case, Violet’s testimony is important as it demonstrates that a few years after the Umayyad mosque was destroyed by a fire in 1893, manuscripts were still kept in the Bayt al-Māl in the courtyard of the mosque.

A fragment similar to the folio kept in Damascus that I mentioned previously and connected to a set of thirty *ǧuz*’ presented to the Great Mosque of Damascus in 910–911 by ‘Abd al-Mun’im b. Aḥmad – a figure I could not identify – is kept in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.<sup>30</sup> This fragment is probably connected to a famous – or infamous – collector of the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, Fredrick Robert Martin.<sup>31</sup> Born in 1868, this Swedish diplomat travelled to Egypt, through the Near East and Anatolia in 1895 and 1896, before joining the Swedish embassy in Constantinople in 1904, where he served as a dragoman until 1908. He had been collecting manuscripts during this period, and seems unscrupulous when it came to the means by which he enlarged his collection. He was above all interested in the arts of the book and did not hesitate in using a razor when he wished to get a specific painting. Actually, some libraries in Istanbul decided to bar him from access to their holdings. He had *inter alia* a few folios from the Quranic manuscript I just mentioned, including the *waqfiyya*. As was the case with the Schefer collection, we do not know where Martin acquired these folios. Had they already reached Istanbul before Martin came there in 1904 and before he left in 1908? They could have been brought there from Damascus during Ottoman times, as happened with some fragments from Fustat. But we cannot exclude the possibility that Martin found them at an earlier date while he was travelling in the Near East.

It is possible that local antique dealers started selling material obtained from the deposit. This could explain why another Damascene manuscript, Ms. or oct. 1819, reached the Staatsbibliothek in 1918 or 1919 (fig. 6.2). Its provenance can

28 BNF Arabe 358b and 360b (see Déroche, *Catalogue II-1/1*, p. 91, no. 85 and p. 126, no. 206; also *Fichier des manuscrits moyen-orientaux datés*, no. 19).

29 BNF Arabe 346a (Déroche, *Catalogue II-1/1*, p. 86, no. 64 and pl. IV c).

30 CBL 1421 (see A. Arberry, *The Koran Illuminated*, Dublin, Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1967, p. 8, no. 16; D. James, *Qur’ans and bindings from the Chester Beatty Library*, London, World of Islam Festival Trust, 1980, p. 20).

31 F.R. Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th Century*, vol. 1, London, Bernard Quaritch, 1912.

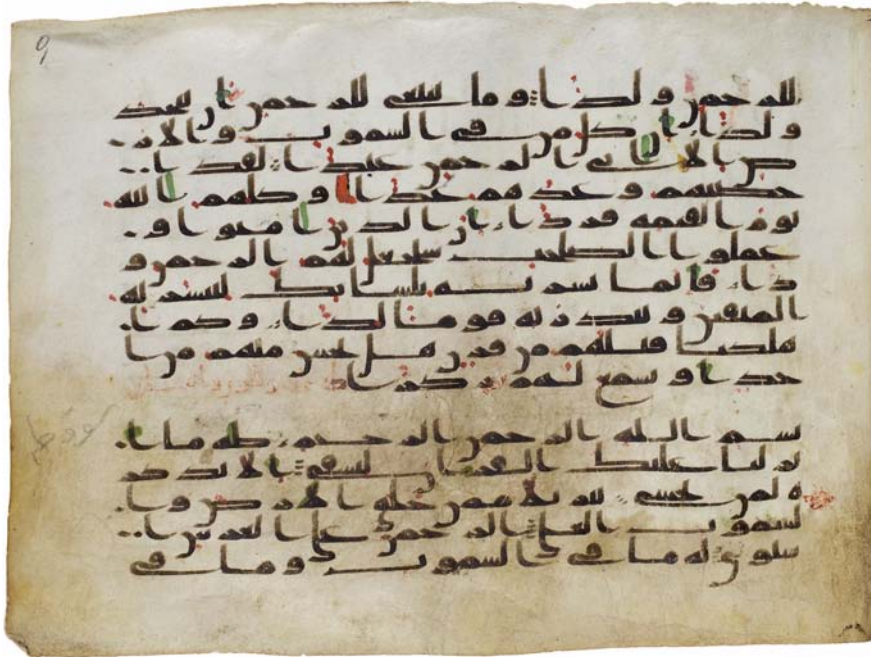


FIGURE 6.2 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR. OCT. 1819, F. 9A

be established thanks to a *waqfiyya* naming the Great Mosque of Damascus, and the binding published by Max Weisweiler is quite consistent with what we know of the local production in the ninth century.<sup>32</sup> The volume was bought by the Berlin library from Julius Loytved-Hardegg's wife. Loytved-Hardegg served as vice-consul in Haifa, and then as consul in Damascus during the First World War.<sup>33</sup> Where and how did he get this volume? As we shall see, we can exclude a direct acquisition from the Bayt al-Māl deposit. Was it part of a group of fragments which had slipped away previously and entered the book/antiquity trading circuits? An informant told me, for instance, that Jean Sauvaget bought a few folios in Damascus in the 1940s. A few folios from the famous Amāğūr Quran now in a Saudi collection could also have been acquired in the same

32 M. Weisweiler, *Der islamische Bucheinband des Mittelalters: Nach Handschriften aus deutschen, holländischen und türkischen Bibliotheken* [= Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen, 10], Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1962, p. 92 and fig. 1. Compare with other early bindings kept from Damascus (see F. Déroche, "Quelques reliures médiévales de provenance damasquine", *Revue des études islamiques*, LIV (1986), pp. 85–99).

33 I am indebted to Christoph Rauch for this information.

way.<sup>34</sup> Actually, we cannot exclude the possibility that the fragments bought by Schefer or Martin, or even the folio Palmer and Tyrwhitt Drake found in Jerusalem, may have been channelled out through local antique dealers.

The various fragments mentioned so far are only a tiny part of what has been preserved from the Damascus deposit. The majority is nowadays kept in Istanbul. How did it reach this city? It has been said that the transfer from Damascus to Istanbul was a consequence of the 1893 fire.<sup>35</sup> But Violet's account demonstrates that the collection was still in Damascus in 1898. According to some Turkish sources, the Damascus collection reached Istanbul in 1911 and was first handed over to the Topkapı Sarayı Museum,<sup>36</sup> before being transferred to the Evqaf Museum, later renamed *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art), where it is now kept. However, three documents in the Başbakanlık Archives indicate that the collection was removed from Damascus during the First World War. They are dated January and February 1917 and show that the Sheykhülislam Mūsā Kāzım Efendi oversaw the operation that was carried out with the help of the Ottoman 4th Army under Cemal Pasha's command.<sup>37</sup> However, some items found their way to the Topkapı Sarayı Museum: according to a keeper of the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, the best looking items were selected by the staff of the former museum. When working on the early copies of the Quran kept in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, I was able to identify a few volumes kept in the Emanet Hazinesi series as part of multi-volume sets of Quranic copies which were once in Damascus. The most obvious case was that of a *ğuz'* from the 'Abd al-Mun'im manuscript belonging to the same series as the Damascus and Dublin fragments.<sup>38</sup>

Most of the folios are kept in the *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*. It is clearly a *geniza* since it contains documents<sup>39</sup> and amulets, books and certifi-

34 *Waḥdat al-fann al-islāmī*, Riyad, Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal lil-Buḥūt wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmīya, AH1405/1985, pp. 26–27.

35 D. and J. Sourdél, "Nouveaux documents sur l'histoire religieuse et sociale de Damas au Moyen Âge", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 32 (1964), pp. 1–25, here p. 2.

36 A. Serkander Demirkol and S. Kutluay, "About the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art Qur'an Collection", in *The 1400th Anniversary of the Qur'an*, ed. Ali S. Demirkol, Istanbul, Min. of Cult. und Tourism, 2010, pp. 139–140.

37 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, DH. ŞFR. 72/3, DH. ŞFR. 73/70 and DH. ŞFR. 73/73. I owe this information to Prof. E. Eldem whom I thank heartily.

38 F. Déroche, "Collections de manuscrits anciens du Coran à Istanbul, Rapport préliminaire", in *Études médiévales et patrimoine turc* [= Cultures et civilisations médiévales, 1], ed. J. Sourdél-Thomine, Paris, C.N.R.S., 1983, pp. 147–149, pl. 1 a and b.

39 D. Sourdél and J. Sourdél-Thomine, "Trois actes de vente damascains du début du 14<sup>e</sup>/x<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8 (1965), pp. 164–185; D. Sourdél and J. Sourdél-Thomine, "Un acte de vente arabe portant sur la région d'Ahlāt au

cates,<sup>40</sup> and Arabic and Latin texts. Quranic manuscripts are by far the most numerous, but literary compositions have also been preserved.<sup>41</sup> There was probably a library within the mosque in medieval times, a place where books were physically kept together. But from the evidence linked directly with the manuscripts, we know that some of the books were available in various points of the prayer hall, notably among the multi-volume sets, which were housed in boxes.

The collection is known as *Şam evraki*, in other words, the 'Damascus papers'. It is clearly distinct from the rest of the manuscript collection in the museum library. The various items belonging to the latter are identified by a number, with no reference to their previous place of conservation. It would have been easy to include this information in the call numbers since the objects kept in the museum were salvaged during the last decades of the Ottoman

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VII<sup>e</sup>/XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *Tarih arastirmaları dergisi*, (1968), pp. 51–60; D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Biens fonciers constitués waqf en Syrie fatimide pour une famille de sarif damascains", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, (1972), pp. 269–296; D. Sourdel, "Deux documents sur la communauté hanbalite de Damas", in *Bulletin d'études orientales* 25 (1972), pp. 141–151; D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Un texte d'invocation en faveur de deux princes ayyubides", in *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History* (Studies in honor of George C. Miles), Beirut, American University, 1974, pp. 347–352; D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Nouvelle lettre d'un docteur hanbalite de Damas à l'époque ayyoubide", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Studies in honor of N. Abbott) 40 (1981), pp. 265–276; J.-M. Mouton, D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, *Mariage et séparation à Damas au Moyen Âge. Un corpus de 62 documents juridiques inédits entre 337/948 et 698/1299* [= Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades, t. 21], Paris, 2013; J.-M. Mouton, D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, *Gouvernance et libéralités de Saladin d'après les données inédites de six documents arabes*, avec un appendice de J. Richard [= Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades, t. 22], Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2015.

40 D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Une collection médiévale de certificats de pèlerinage à La Mekke conservés à Istanbul. Les actes de la période seljoukide et bouride", in *Études médiévales et patrimoine turc* [= *Cultures et civilisations médiévales*, 1], ed. J. Sourdel-Thomine, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1983, pp. 167–273; S. Aksoy and R. Milstein, "A collection of thirteenth-century illustrated hajj certificates", in *M. Ugur Derman Festschrift. Papers presented on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. I.C. Schick, Istanbul, Sabancı Üniversitesi, 2000, pp. 101–134; D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, *Certificats de pèlerinage d'époque ayyoubide. Contribution à l'histoire de l'idéologie de l'islam au temps des croisades* [= Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades, t. 19], Paris, Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2006.

41 D. Sourdel, "Un pamphlet musulman d'époque 'abbaside contre les chrétiens", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 34 (1966), pp. 1–31; R. Dagorn, "Un traité de coquetterie féminine du haut Moyen Âge", *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 42 (1974), pp. 163–181; D. Sourdel and J. Sourdel-Thomine, "Une collection islamique ancienne de textes de prières", in *Recherches d'islamologie* (Mélanges Anawati-Gardet), Louvain, Peeters, 1978, pp. 285–294.

Empire – they were taken from mosques or other such institutions where they were at risk of being stolen.

The *Şam evrakı* collection became part of the museum holdings towards 1920. Actually, judging from the seals which were used to indicate that the fragments belonged to the museum and to provide their call number, the main task of making an inventory started after the introduction of the Latin alphabet in 1928. The inventory entries are also written in this alphabet. The folios which reached the museum were in a state of great disorder. In some cases, an almost complete volume had survived, but usually fragments range from one to ten or twenty folios. The person (or persons) in charge of the inventory does not seem to have contemplated the possibility of reconstructing as far as possible the original manuscripts or even grouping the fragments according to their size or number of lines. They apparently decided to take the fragments as they came out of the crates that I imagine they had been piled into for transport, perhaps choosing some of the best-looking ones for the first numbers as they could be exhibited in the museum. Every single item (once again ranging from a single folio to a whole volume) received a number at the beginning. When number 12,000 was reached, there was still a large amount of work to be done since the collection contains approximately 200,000 fragments. It was thus decided to stop giving a number to every item and instead to make bundles of 100 or 200 folios, each of which would receive a number until the end of the collection was reached (at number 13,600).

After this lengthy reconstruction of the fate of the Damascus deposit of worn-out codices, mainly Quranic, let us turn back to Wetzstein and the fragments he acquired while serving as consul of Prussia in Damascus. Wetzstein had a scholarly training, was interested in research, as can be seen by his bibliography, and, although living in the Near East at a time when communications were not easy, was never cut from the scientific world. During the time he spent in Syria, he remained in touch with his former teacher, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer. The purchase of the Rifā'iyya library in 1853<sup>42</sup> implied, for instance, a close collaboration between the two men, who maintained close ties over the years, as we can conclude from their various contributions in commentaries on books of the Old Testament published between 1867 and 1876. Buying manuscripts in Damascus was not a kind of exotic hobby; an economic interest may have been involved, but scientific considerations obviously had their part.

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42 B. Liebrecht, *Die Rifā'iyya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, pp. 43–66.

A parallel can be drawn between Wetzstein and another nineteenth-century Oriental scholar, Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville, who was a pupil of Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy and for many years agent of the French consulate in Cairo. There he managed to accumulate a handsome collection of manuscripts, notably an important group of early fragments of Quranic codices, which were later bought from his widow by the Bibliothèque royale in Paris, now the Bibliothèque nationale de France.<sup>43</sup> Wetzstein and Asselin de Cherville had largely similar careers and their training as Arabists gave them a good understanding of the Arabic manuscripts they bought.

Things were, however, somewhat different when it came to the early Quranic fragments. Both men could have become acquainted with this very specific material before they were posted to Cairo or Damascus. The collection Marcel had been able to obtain from the Fustat cache reached Paris when the members of the French expedition returned to France after the conclusion of the agreement with the Anglo-Ottoman forces in 1801.<sup>44</sup> I have been unable to establish whether Asselin had access to Marcel's collection and had some idea about this material (and where to find it) before he left France for Egypt. Marcel had already brought back some leaves of an early copy in *ḥiḡāzī* style,<sup>45</sup> the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus, of which Asselin managed later to acquire a substantial number of folios.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Asselin may have received some conception of the *ḥiḡāzī* style from Silvestre de Sacy, who had discovered the famous place where al-Nadim describes the script of Mekka a long time before the publication of the *Fihrist* by Flügel in 1871. He published it when Asselin was already in Egypt, in 1808, in a lengthy paper he had been working on since at least 1785.<sup>47</sup> His pupil had perhaps been enlightened by some information deriving from this research, writing in 1814 that he "owned various leaves of the oldest known manuscript [of the Quran]";<sup>48</sup> alluding

43 F. Déroche, *La transmission écrite du Coran dans les débuts de l'islam: Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus* [= Texts and studies on the Qur'ān, 5], Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2009, pp. 15–16.

44 H. Laurens, C.G. Gillespie, J.-C. Golvin, and C. Traunecker, *L'expédition d'Égypte 1798–1801*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1989, p. 319.

45 They are now kept in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg, MS Marcel 18 (see Déroche, *Transmission écrite*, pp. 10–13).

46 Paris, BnF Arabe 328 a and b (Déroche, *Transmission écrite*, pp. 13–16; also Déroche, *Catalogue II-1/1*, pp. 59–60, nos. 2 and 3, pl. v).

47 A.I. Silvestre de Sacy, "Mémoire sur l'origine et les anciens monumens de la littérature parmi les Arabes", *Mémoires de littérature tirés des registres de l'Académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, t. 50 (1808), pp. 247–348 (re-ed. in F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosedá, *Arabe 328 (a)*, Lesa, 1998, pp. xxvii–lxxxi).

48 J.L. Asselin de Cherville, "Lettre de M.J.L. Asselin de Cherville, Agent du Consulat général

quite certainly to the parts of the Codex Parisino-petropolitanus he managed to obtain. In the same letter, he explained that he had collected a large number of early Quranic leaves in order to “build up an Arabic palaeography”.<sup>49</sup>

“In the interests of palaeography” – precisely the words Wetzstein, almost fifty years later, used in the introduction to the catalogue of the manuscripts he sold in 1864 to the Württemberg government, providing reasons in support of the purchase of early Quranic fragments.<sup>50</sup> This aim was already indicated in 1859 – without palaeography being named – in his handwritten catalogue of the second Berlin collection: the forty-six items, wrote Wetzstein, “perhaps contain all the variants of the equally rare and valuable [Kufic] script” (fig. 6.3).<sup>51</sup> What was his own experience in this field? He may have been aware of Asselin’s activity and of the contents of his collection through Seetzen’s paper published in 1809 by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in the *Fundgruben des Orients*, or of Asselin’s own letter published in the *Magasin encyclopédique* in 1815.<sup>52</sup> However, these were mere clues for Wetzstein, who had no idea of the extent of the Parisian holdings – and was probably unaware of Marcel’s own collection. At the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale (more accurately at that moment, *impériale*) was still a project and Marcel’s leaves were in the process of being sold to the Russian government.<sup>53</sup> In the introduction to the catalogue of his second collection, Wetzstein could therefore state in 1859 that no “European library contain[ed] by far so rich a collection”.<sup>54</sup> He may, of course, have been

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de France, au Caire, à M. Dacier, Secrétaire perpétuel de la troisième Classe de l’Institut”, *Magasin Encyclopédique*, 3 (1815), pp. 82–90, p. 89.

49 Ibid.

50 J.G. Wetzstein, *Catalog arabischer Manuscripte in Damaskus gesammelt*, Berlin, 1863, p. 2. On the Tübingen collection, see A. Fedeli, “The Kufic Collection of the Prussian Consul Wetzstein: The 1100 Leaves of the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen and Their Importance for Palaeography and Qur’anic Criticism”, in *Writings and Writing: Investigations in Islamic Text and Script in Honour of Dr. Januarius Justus Witkam*, ed. Robert M. Kerr and Thomas Milo, Cambridge, Archetype, 2013, pp. 117–142.

51 Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 2.

52 “Auszug eines Briefes des Herrn Kollegienassessors Seezen [*sic*] an Herrn von Hammer”, *Fundgruben des Orients / Mines de l’Orient* 1 (1809), pp. 43–75 and 112–127; Asselin de Cherville, “Lettre”, p. 87.

53 *Otchet’ Imperatorskoj publichnoj biblioteki za 1864 goda*, St Petersburg, 1865, pp. 22–24; *Otchet’ Imperatorskoj publichnoj biblioteki za 1865 goda*, St Petersburg, 1866, p. 51 (no. 5); O. Vasilyeva, “Oriental Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia”, *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 2 (June 1996) 2, pp. 19–35, here p. 20.

54 J.G. Wetzstein, *Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 2.

7.

Vorwort zum Catalog.

Dieser Bibliothek wurde in den Jahren von 1852 bis Jahr 1858 in den östlichen Theilen Syriens von dem berühmten Herrn in die Hände gebracht, Mosul, Hile, Bagdad und Kairo sind Gemeines geworden. Dasselbe aus Medina und Mekka besteht die Sammlung 8 Bücher.

Im Jahr 1858 Neuwien, d. h. jetzt Wien, wurde ein Teil der Collectanea, nehmlich Abschriften gesammelt, wurde als eine Nummer gesammelt. Von Neuwien folgten oder kamen, nehmlich Abschriften, die wurde kein Catalogische nehmlich gesammelt in einer Auflage gelangt aus als eine Nummer gesammelt, wie bei N: 1858. 1859. 1860 u. öfter

Mit Aufbruch von 12 orientalischen Arabien (No 1901 bis 1912) sind sämtliche Bücher gesammelt (Manuscripte).

In der Sammlung befinden sich 50 in Paris gesammelte und herrliche Sprach gesammelte Bücher, alle übrigen sind arabisch.

Die Sammlung enthält nicht allein geschriebene Werke, sondern auch sämtliche von den Arabern gelehrte Wissenschaften, so besteht noch über dies einige eigene Bücher, die nicht nur von anderen aus dem Orient gekommenen gelehrten Sammler verschafft, sondern auch auf die Mittel der Kunst gemacht wurde.

Es lag es in der Absicht der Sammlung, wie möglich vollständige Collection der arabischen Literatur zu haben, und bei dieser günstigen Stelle in Wien ist ein neuer langjähriger Aufbruch, wie kein Opfer gescheit gelangt es ihm, dass für die Wissenschaften, dass Alles was von dieser Art hat als in der Stadt der Wissenschaften gesammelt wird übergegangen ist befindet sich in dieser Sammlung.

Sammlung 1

FIGURE 6.3 J.G. Wetzstein, Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek des Dr. J.G. Wetzstein, 1859, f. 1a  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTHEILUNG, OR. HB D 19 (HS. OR. SIM. 8947)

extolling the value of what he was selling as a commercial argument and was correct if he was thinking of the Gotha collection, which contains about 150 folios.<sup>55</sup>

The latter was a source of information about early Quranic scripts which lay close at hand for Wetzstein. He could have taken advantage of the efforts made by Seetzen to secure samples of the early Quranic scripts from the deposit in Fustat.<sup>56</sup> The German traveller did not have Wetzstein's or Asselin de Cherville's scholarly background, but he succeeded in collecting some fragments in Fustat while staying in Cairo for a few months in 1808 and 1809, during the journey he had undertaken through the Near East with the support of the Duke of Saxony-Gotha. Although he died in Yemen, he had sent the items he had previously acquired to Gotha and a catalogue of the Quranic fragments collection had been published as early as 1826 by Johann Heinrich Möller.<sup>57</sup> In 1844, Möller reproduced in his *Paläographische Beiträge aus den herzoglichen Sammlungen in Gotha* samples of the most important pieces.<sup>58</sup> Wetzstein may have seen the book since he was then still in Europe – he may even have paid a visit to the Gotha library, which was not very far from Leipzig. However, it should be noted that Seetzen did not acquire any fragments dating to earlier than the eighth century.

When looking at the fragments in the collection sold to the Berlin library in 1862, one sees clearly that they were selected in order to cover a wide spectrum of early script styles. Like Asselin de Cherville, Wetzstein was not just buying items that appealed to a bibliophile's taste, he was also piling up fragments from various copies in different styles, not necessarily the nicest specimens, but conveying information about the development of the early Arabic script. Conversely, he did not consider it worthwhile buying more recent copies of the Quran. In this respect, his approach differs from that of Schefer, who had sixteen Quranic manuscripts of high calligraphic quality in his collection.<sup>59</sup> It is

55 W. Pertsch, *Die orientalischen Handschriften der herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*, III, *Die arabischen Handschriften* 1, Gotha, Perthes, 1878, pp. 376–396 (nos. 427–464).

56 Seetzen's journal was published in 1855 by F. Kruse when Wetzstein was in Damascus and it is unclear whether he would have been able to read it. But he should have been aware of Möller's publications (see below).

57 J.H. Möller, *Catalogus librorum tam manuscriptorum quam impressorum qui jussu ... Augusti Ducis saxo-gothani a ... Seetzenio in Oriente emti in bibliotheca gothana asservantur*, Gotha, Gläser, 1826.

58 J.H. Möller, *Paläographische Beiträge aus den herzoglichen Sammlungen in Gotha*, Eisleben, Reichardt, 1844.

59 Arabe 5416, 5816, 5839–5841, 5844–5846, 5848, 5850, 5935, 5949, 6004, 6073, 6082 (see Déroche, *Catalogue II*, 1/1, *passim*).

not clear how he managed to examine the material he decided to buy, although he obviously was primarily looking for fragments on parchment.<sup>60</sup>

He does not seem to have heard about the Umayyad mosque's cache prior to 1851, when he sold his first collection to the Berlin library. According to the foreword to the catalogue of his second collection, written in 1859, the worn-out codices were discovered by chance and nobody knew anything about them before.<sup>61</sup> He does not explicitly mention the mosque: it is not clear whether he was aware that the fragments were hidden (*Verborgenheit*) there.<sup>62</sup> We can wonder whether he was ever able to gain personal access to the deposit itself and glance through the leaves in order to select those which seemed interesting. We have seen that visitors were allowed into the Bayt al-Māl, but the information concerns the end of the nineteenth century. We also know from various accounts that buying Arabic manuscripts was not very easy for non-Muslims. In the posthumously published journal of his journey through the Near East, Seetzen records an incident in which he was involved in Cairo when a passer-by fiercely denounced a bookbinder from whom Seetzen was about to buy a book.<sup>63</sup> Very often intermediaries made the transactions easier – and also more expensive and, in the case of the Quranic fragments, more random. Wetzstein's position allowed him to be in touch with a variety of informants and some people may have brought him selections of folios, from which he would select those which most interested him.<sup>64</sup> However, I could not find any information about the way in which he was able to buy the Quranic fragments from the Great Mosque.

In the Istanbul part of the Damascus collection, the disbound volumes can be found in quantities ranging from an isolated folio to a group of various quires. In this respect, the Wetzstein collections in Berlin and Tübin-

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60 On p. 86, the section of the handwritten catalogue devoted to the Quranic fragments is entitled "Kufic parchments" (*Kufische Pergamente*); a subtitle including a reference to parchment (*Sammlung kufischer Pergamente*) has been written below, followed by the indication "gazelle skin" (*Gazellenhaut*) between brackets (Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 86).

61 Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 2.

62 In a letter to Fleischer, dated Damascus, 20 March 1853, Wetzstein mentions as the provenance of four "Kufic" Qurans acquired by Petermann "a very old holy *مُحْرَبِيَّة*", which might refer to the deposit in the courtyard of the Great Mosque. I owe this information to Dr B. Liebrecht, whom I thank heartily.

63 Seetzen, *Reisen*, pp. 228–229.

64 He actually states that he was able to buy manuscripts outside Damascus through his contacts in various places in the region, such as Mardin, Mosul, Hilla, Baghdad or even Cairo (Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 1).

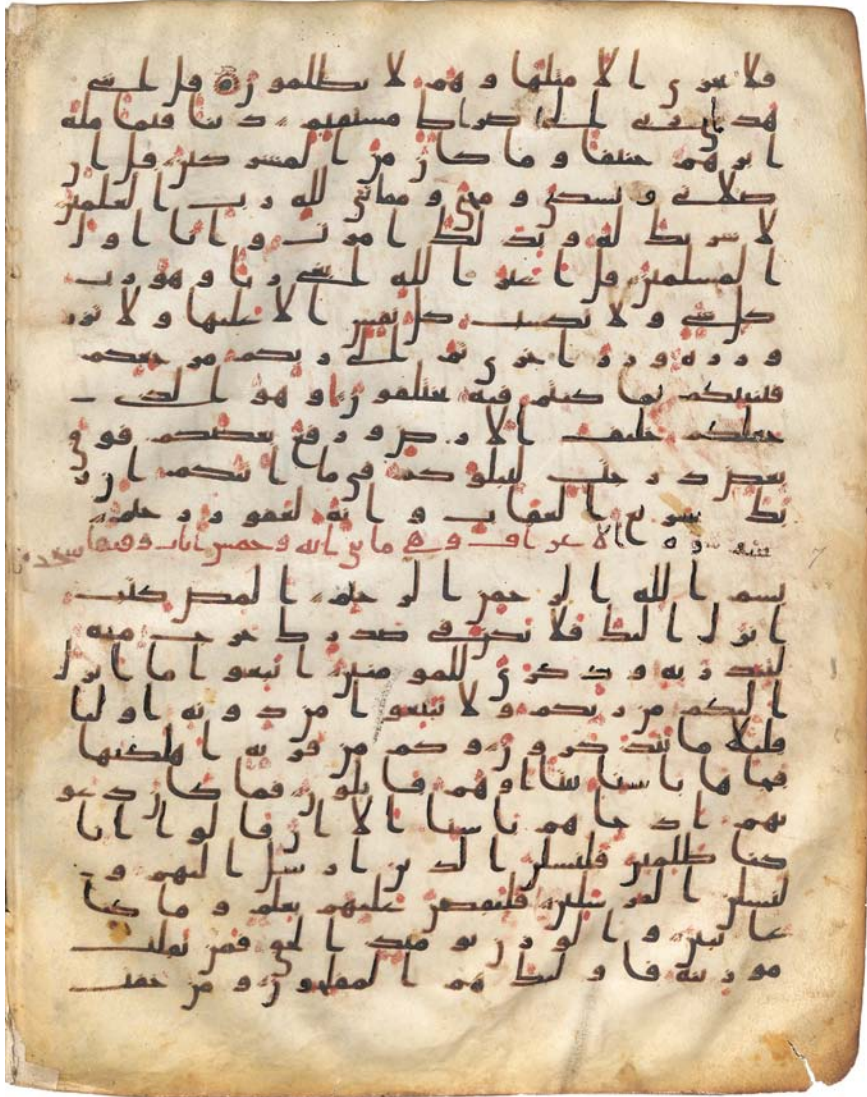


FIGURE 6.4 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, WETZSTEIN II 1913, F. 54B

gen reflect this situation perfectly: they contain items with a single folio, like Wetzstein II 1924 or Tübingen Ma VI 167, a bifolio (Tübingen Ma VI 152 or 158), as well as volumes of 210 ff. (Wetzstein II 1913, fig. 6.4) or 217 (Tübingen Ma VI 150). Very often, Wetzstein bought complete quires, isolated or grouped, for instance Wetzstein II 1928 (10ff.), Tübingen Ma VI 168 (20ff.) and Wetzstein II 1925 (60ff.). This could be seen as indicating purchases made through middlemen,

since it would be sufficient for palaeographical purposes to have two folios – as can be found in the Gotha collection. If he had been able to pick the fragments himself, he might have selected significant folios rather than a quire. On the other hand, the scripts spectrum covers essentially most of the styles from the eighth to early tenth centuries. The oldest manuscripts are Wetzstein II 1913 and Tübingen Ma VI 165, both B 1a style copies with 210 and 77 folios respectively, typical of a late, already rather standardised *hiġāzī* production. Many codices in this style have been noted. An isolated folio, Wetzstein II 1960, could also belong to the earlier layer of the collection.

It is no surprise that in a mosque which included a place called “the Maghribis’ corner” fragments stemming from copies produced or used in the Western Islamic world can be found. The two oldest known Quranic copies in Maghribi script were discovered in the Damascus collection.<sup>65</sup> Three fragments, notably Wetzstein II 1917, witness this flow of manuscripts between the eastern and western parts of the Islamic world. Wetzstein also bought samples of early Quranic manuscripts written on paper, mostly written in New Style script – these are certainly among the oldest extant Quranic copies on paper.<sup>66</sup>

Between the Berlin and Tübingen collections of early Quranic material, there is a change in the composition of the acquisitions, perhaps also in their pace. In only three years, between 1860 and 1862, he was able to buy 1,130 ff., as against 835 previously (but we do not know during what period). In Berlin, the average size of the items is eighteen ff.; among the forty-six items, five have more than fifty ff. In Tübingen, the average size is almost forty-two ff. and eight out of twenty-seven items have more than fifty ff. Is this change the result of a collector’s good luck? Or is there another explanation?

Back in 1859, in the catalogue of the collection that he sold to the Berlin library, Wetzstein was aware that the early fragments contained new elements for further research. He pointed out that he had “found from time to time forms which are indicated neither among the variant readings in the systems of the Quran readers, nor by the later Quran commentators”.<sup>67</sup> This approach largely followed the same lines as that of Johann Georg Christian Adler in his study

65 F. Déroche, “Deux fragments coraniques maghrébins anciens au Musée des arts turc et islamique (Istanbul)”, *Revue des Études Islamiques*, LIX (1991), pp. 229–236.

66 They are found at the end of the collection, the paper being described as “Baumwollenpapier” (Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 88; the same description appears again in the Tübingen catalogue, Wetzstein, *Catalog arabischer Manuscripte*, p. 17).

67 Wetzstein, *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 2.

of the Copenhagen manuscripts published in 1780 – which was imbued with the influence of Biblical studies.<sup>68</sup> But in the introduction to the catalogue of the collection he sold to the state of Württemberg in 1864, commenting on his purchase of the Quranic leaves which are now in the Tübingen collection, Wetzstein states that he had acquired the Quranic leaves “in the interests of the palaeography and Quranic criticism”.<sup>69</sup>

The latter point is something new. Important developments in the field of philological research were taking place during the first half of the nineteenth century and Carl Lachmann’s methods of textual criticism were receiving much attention. Wetzstein was certainly aware of this since it was happening almost under his eyes. At Leipzig University, he began studying theology only two years after Constantin Tischendorf in the early 1840s made his first important discoveries with the Codex Ephraemi rescriptus, then with the first leaves he brought back from St Catherine’s. Both Lachman and Tischendorf worked on Christian Scriptures and prepared scientific editions. But research was not restricted to that field and the endeavours of Abraham Firkovitch, collecting material from the *genizôt* in Caucasian synagogues, show a similar interest in early manuscripts in other fields.

Wetzstein more probably became aware of this new avenue for research following an episode in which he was implicated. In 1857, the French Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, under the influence of Ernest Renan, asked prospective competitors of an academic competition to “trace the history of the Quran” and explicitly mentioned the written transmission as an element which they were expected to take into account.<sup>70</sup> As the prize had been advertised on the front page of the 11 August 1857 issue of the *Moniteur impérial*, the French official newspaper, the matter was completely public. Wetzstein could have read this, but his information derived certainly from another source. One of the contenders was a promising young scholar, Theodor Nöldeke. He had heard about the prize during the summer of 1857 and did not fail to note the specific reference to the earliest copies of the Quran in the text, sketching out the questions which the candidates for the prize would have to tackle. Eager to answer the requirements fully, he looked around for early Quranic codices. He was then in Leiden, but although he knew that there was a collection in Paris, he did not visit the library – and apologised in the letter he sent to the Academy

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68 Adler, *Descriptio*.

69 Wetzstein, *Catalog arabischer Manuscripte*, p. 2.

70 *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres pour 1857*, Paris, 1858, p. 140.

for not getting there.<sup>71</sup> In the German translation of his Latin essay, Nöldeke lists the early Quranic manuscripts he could examine: in addition to the few facsimiles available so far, he managed to see all the fragments in Gotha, four manuscripts in Berlin<sup>72</sup> and the c. forty in Wetzstein's collection in Berlin.<sup>73</sup> It is difficult to imagine that Wetzstein did not get at least some inkling of what was going on.

The possibility of looking at the more than forty fragments of manuscripts from Damascus certainly seemed a very lucky opportunity, but Nöldeke missed a point in deciding not to go to Paris: as Wetzstein, in contrast to Schefer or Palmer and Tyrwhitt, had not bought in Damascus any leaf from a copy of the Quran from the second half of the seventh century, Nöldeke could only conclude that the material he used for his essay was late and that it was of limited use for a history of the Quranic text. As a minor actor in this episode, Wetzstein became acquainted with the latest developments in Quranic research at that time and we may assume that he acquired a copy of the *Geschichte des Qurâns* when it was published in 1860.

It was probably as a sequel to this episode that Wetzstein started collecting Quranic fragments again – although economic considerations may also have played their part. But, of course, the scope of the collection was different. I wonder whether Wetzstein's phrase about the "Korancritic" in the Tübingen catalogue of 1863 does not echo Renan's phrase that "time has come to apply criticism to this compendium" (meaning: the Quran), which is one of the highlights of the announcement issued in 1857, not in the *Moniteur impérial*, but in the proceedings of the Académie.<sup>74</sup> Textual criticism implied that larger sections of text were required in order to carry out research than was the case with the early nineteenth-century approach focusing on palaeography, a point Wetzstein understood perfectly. This could be the explanation for the change in his purchasing pattern and his quest for larger fragments. The echo of Nöldeke's publication and the new perspectives opened up by the debate following the 1857 academic competition may have been one of the reasons why the

71 Th. Nöldeke, Archives de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Prix du Budget, année 1859, folder no. 1, cover letter, f. 1b, l. 3–11.

72 Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qurâns*, p. 301.

73 We may assume that they correspond to those which are now part of the Staatsbibliothek's holdings. Actually, Nöldeke refers to the "cod. Wetzst. n.s. nr. 4" (ibid., p. 304): this seems to be a reference to an intermediary stage of the integration of Wetzstein's fragments that Nöldeke was familiar with since he was working in the library when he was informed of his success.

74 *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres pour 1857*, Paris, 1858, p. 140.



FIGURE 6.5 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR. QUART. 1208, NO. II, F. 1A

Württemberg government decided to buy the second collection in 1864 for the university library in Tübingen. However, 150 years had to elapse before a carbon 14 analysis showed a wider audience the importance of Wetzstein's acquisitions in Damascus. Wetzstein retained a few parchment folios, among them one from Amāğūr's Quran, which became part of the Staatsbibliothek's collection after his death (fig. 6.5).<sup>75</sup>

As the research on the early Quranic codices is now in full development, we can only thank scholars like Wetzstein for their interest in those fragments that were decaying in forgotten deposits. They are now providing new insights into the history of the Quranic text during the first centuries of Islam, but also into the place of the Quranic copies within early medieval Muslim societies.

75 Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or. quart. 1208. These are perhaps the folios Friedrich Schwally saw during a visit he paid to Wetzstein (see a letter from Friedrich Schwally to the Royal Library in Berlin from 21 April 1901. *Acta betr. die Erwerbung der arabischen Handschriften-Sammlung des Königlichen Consuls Dr. Wetzstein*, vol. 2 [SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Acta III C 18-2]). See also the contribution of Liebreuz/Rauch to this volume.

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# Johann Gottfried Wetzstein's Manuscripts Containing Arabic Popular Stories

*Jan Just Witkam*

## 1 Introduction<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>

I have known of Wetzstein's work ever since my first reading of volume eight of Ahlwardt's catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in Berlin, back in the 1970s. However, I read for the first time about Wetzstein the man only about a decade ago, in a letter (from Berlin, dated 7 August 1887) sent by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to P.N. van der Chijs, Snouck Hurgronje's contact in Jeddah.<sup>1</sup> In this letter, he writes (my translation from Dutch):

I have learnt many interesting things from Wetzstein about the Syrian Bedouin tribe of the Ènèzè. Wetzstein had for many years a village of his own, founded by himself, inhabited by Muslim farmers, and he had intimate contacts with the most important *sjêchs* of the Ènèzè. They would stay with him when they came to Damascus, in order to avoid the excesses of *Ṭama*<sup>ʿ</sup> [greed] of the *Wālī* [governor]. It is curious that these people usually do not even know the creed of Islam (*ashhadu*, etc.), and they decide everything according to the *ʿĀda* [customary law] which sometimes is rather strange.<sup>2</sup>

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\* I gratefully acknowledge the practical help that I received during my research in Berlin in 2014 and 2015 from curator Christoph Rauch and his staff in the Orientabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek. At the same time, it is regrettable that that the library risks being the last major West European library where readers are not permitted to make electronic images. This rule, without an apparent rationale, has hampered the progress of my work and has considerably increased my travel expenses.

\*\* Dr. Boris Liebrecht kindly drew my attention to several publications concerning Wetzstein's life and work. I have profited from this very much.

1 For another episode in the relationship between Van der Chijs and Snouck Hurgronje, see my "Copy on demand: Abū Šubbāk in Mecca, 1303/1886", in *The trade in papers bearing marks in non-Latin characters*, ed. Anne Regourd, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2018, pp. 206–226.

2 MS Leiden Or. 8952 A.1069. Snouck Hurgronje's transliteration of some Arabic words is left intact. The original letter can be viewed online through Leiden's general catalogue.

Three letters written by Wetzstein to Snouck Hurgronje are preserved in the library at Leiden.<sup>3</sup> The two met in 1887, when Snouck Hurgronje visited Berlin. The young explorer of Mecca was greatly impressed by Wetzstein and his fourteen years of experience in the field. Snouck Hurgronje had only lived in Arabia for one year, five months of which he had spent in Mecca. Wetzstein's letters are full of informative facts and quotations. Much more of the correspondence between Wetzstein and Snouck Hurgronje is preserved in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, where there are seven drafts of the letters that Wetzstein sent to his young Dutch friend between 19 May 1887 and 14 February 1889, and seventeen letters that Snouck Hurgronje wrote to Wetzstein between 15 March 1887 and 28 February 1889.<sup>4</sup>

In his three letters in the Leiden library, Wetzstein emerges as an inexhaustible source of knowledge, with snippets of information and poetical quotations, as well as all sorts of literary detours and diversions. It is not just the source that appears limitless, all the information is given in the most friendly and sympathetic way. His general erudition is illustrated by much more than his letters, however; his three *excursus*, published at the end of Delitzsch's commentary on the Book of Genesis,<sup>5</sup> being a case in point and certainly not an isolated instance.

Although Wetzstein's biography has never been written, the turning point in his life must have been his return to Berlin, with all its social and financial limitations. This is in sharp contrast to his time in Damascus, where he had been the proud and absolute ruler over a kingdom of literature and scholarship and at the centre of consular affairs. "Consul Wetzstein", as he continued to be known after his return to Berlin, was one persona. Another, a result of the petty jealousies that came to plague his later academic life, was "the man that knew too much". Indeed, his erudition may have inadvertently reminded others of their own ignorance. In my opinion, this aspect would be an interesting lead

3 Wetzstein's letters in the Snouck Hurgronje Archive are MS Leiden, Or. 8952 A: 1069, dated 20 May 1887, 30 May 1887, 15 August 1888. These letters can be viewed online through Leiden's general catalogue. A single letter by Wetzstein, sent in 1900 to M.J. de Goeje (1836–1909) and now kept in the De Goeje Archive (MS Leiden BPL 2389), is not available online.

4 They are listed in Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein in der Handschriftenabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006, pp. 121–122. They are not included by P.S. van Koningsveld in his *Minor German Correspondences of C. Snouck Hurgronje from libraries in France, Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands*, Leiden, Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, 1987.

5 Franz Delitzsch, *Commentar über die Genesis. Mit Beiträgen von Professor H.L. Fleischer und Consul Wetzstein*, Leipzig, Dörffling und Franke, 1872. The three *excursus* by Wetzstein are on pp. 561–590.

for a biographer. Generosity comes with its disadvantages, as not everybody is comfortable with feeling obliged to repay unsolicited favours; paradoxically, bitterness and resentment are sometimes the result, and Wetzstein may well have witnessed his share of this. The proceedings of the Berlin conference on Wetzstein may constitute the starting point for a project to review the life and work of this fascinating man.<sup>6</sup>

The first Wetzstein collection came to Berlin in 1851, the second in 1862. The third is the Rifāʿī collection, which is kept in the University Library in Leipzig, and the fourth is a collection of 173 items that Wetzstein collected towards the end of his stay in Syria in 1860–1861; this latter is kept in Tübingen.<sup>7</sup> It seems that Wetzstein indulged in the manuscript trade mostly for financial reasons. The first two Wetzstein collections are fully integrated into the Staatsbibliothek as Wetzsteiniana I (193 volumes) and Wetzsteiniana II (1,962 volumes),<sup>8</sup> and the Arabic manuscripts in them are described in Ahlwardt's catalogue. Looking into that eighth volume of Ahlwardt's great work, which mostly treats popular stories and romance cycles, one is struck by the many hundreds of references to the Wetzsteiniana II collection (siglum We.). As a whole, that collection contains texts on many more subjects than romances, but popular stories are a large and significant part of it.<sup>9</sup>

6 I wrote the present article as my contribution to the proceedings of the conference "Studies on Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905). Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies", held in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, 19–21 February 2015. My presentation at the conference can be viewed at [http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/files/Wetzstein-Berlin-2015-categorized-short-conference-version-long-version%20\[Compatibility%20Mode\].pdf](http://www.islamicmanuscripts.info/files/Wetzstein-Berlin-2015-categorized-short-conference-version-long-version%20[Compatibility%20Mode].pdf). Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preussischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): Dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren* [= Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 136], Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1989 almost exclusively treats Wetzstein as consul in Damascus. Huhn, *Nachlass*, is an inventory of the documents that she used in her book of 1989.

7 For the Tübingen collection, see the contribution of Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf to this publication.

8 However, Hars Kurio in 'Die Wetzstein'schen Handschriftensammlungen der Orientabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz', in: Huhn, *Nachlass*, pp. xiii–xiv, has different years and figures.

9 W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*. Achter Band. Berlin, A. Asher & Co., 1896 (= *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. Zwanzigster Band). See also id., *Zehnter Band*. Berlin, A. Asher & Co., 1899, pp. 25–47, for a number concordance of these two Wetzstein collections in Berlin: a complete survey of the two Wetzstein collections in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek is given on pp. 25–26 with a concordance of the first Wetzstein collection (siglum We.), comprising 193 items that correspond with Ahlwardt's catalogue numbers. On pp. 27–47 is a concordance of the second Wetzstein collection (siglum We.), comprising 1962 numbers. The total of 193 + 1962 = 2155 items, which contain many more individual texts as many volumes contain more than one text.

## 2 Wetzstein's Manuscripts

Ahlwardt's survey of popular stories and romance cycles is largely, though not exclusively, based on the Wetzsteiniana II manuscripts. A few other collections in the Staatsbibliothek contain popular stories and romances as well. What is said here, with reference to the Wetzsteiniana II collection, about a typology of Arabic manuscripts of popular stories equally applies to the relevant items in the other collections.

About his collecting of manuscripts, among them the popular stories, Wetzstein writes in his own catalogue of the Wetzsteiniana II collection, which was never published (my translation from German):

This library was acquired in the period between 1852 and 1858 directly from the owners in the towns in the East of Syria, and on commission from the towns of Mardin, Mosul, Hilla, Baghdad and Cairo. There are even eight books in the collection from Medina and Mecca.<sup>10</sup>

The collection not only contains numerous works about all branches of science that have been cultivated by the Arabs, it also contains some materials that one does not encounter in other larger collections that have come from the Orient, and which deserve further mention:

[...] It was the purpose of the collection to provide a complete as possible collection of the ancient Arabic belletrism. [...] After many years' hard work, with many sacrifices [...] almost every aspect of this literature that had not been lost over the centuries, can be found in this collection: legends, stories, novellas, novels, semi-histories, both in poetry and (rhymed) prose [...] which fills the sons of the desert with enthusiasm.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek des Dr. J.G. Wetzstein königl. Preuss. Consuls in Damaskus*, p. 1. This is Wetzstein's own catalogue of the Wetzsteiniana II collection. It is partially preserved as a manuscript in Wetzstein's hand in the Orientabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek. The introduction is dated (p. 5) Berlin, 20 April 1859. It must have consisted of several volumes and Ahlwardt must have had it on his desk when compiling his eighth volume of the Berlin catalogue. However, the part from which Ahlwardt quotes is now apparently lost. Only a fragment of Wetzstein's detailed catalogue seems to have been preserved in the Staatsbibliothek, as Hs. or. sim. 8943 (on its front cover it contains a label with the mark Or. HB D 9). It covers MSS We. 314 through We. 418. See Christoph Rauch's contribution to this volume on Wetzstein's own catalogue.

<sup>11</sup> *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, pp. 1–2. Immediately after, Wetzstein

Wetzstein then mentions the most important titles:

Sīrat ‘Antar, Benī Hilāl, Delheme, Iskandar, Bedr Nār, Sayf Du Yazan, Arqaṭ, ‘Anqa, Miqdād, al-Ḥākīm, al-Kurdī, Ğawdar, ‘Amr al-Nu‘mān, Ḥamza Qrān, al-Malik al-Ṭāhir (Baybars), etc. [...] Many of these could be connected with the *Arabian Nights*, but the mass of this literature is now much larger and complete, and such a collection cannot be brought together again. In Damascus, hardly any manuscript copies of the longer and shorter literary compositions are left. In this respect, the present collection will remain useful.<sup>12</sup>

Ahlwardt has a more no-nonsense approach to the storytelling volumes in the Wetzstein collection. In a short introduction to volume eight of his catalogue, he mentions the main romances, stresses the importance and uniqueness of the *Sīrat ‘Antar* manuscripts, and occasionally quotes from Wetzstein’s descriptions.<sup>13</sup> Whatever one may think of this type of literature, Ahlwardt writes, the sheer size of this source, now in the Berlin library, cannot be ignored. Ahlwardt refers to the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* as the most valuable sub-collection in the Staatsbibliothek. This huge cycle is almost exclusively present in the Wetzsteiniana II collection (Ahlwardt nos. 9188–9361 = Catalogue, vol. 8, pp. 155–462).

This proportion of popular stories within the Wetzsteiniana II collection is not well represented in the internet presentation of the Oriental collections in the Staatsbibliothek. Of the c. 60 Wetzstein manuscripts that I found online (in February 2015), only a few volumes with popular stories have been made available, and these seem to have been selected in a haphazard way. There is certainly enough work still to be done.<sup>14</sup>

Another important job for literary historians relates to the fact that the content of Ahlwardt’s eighth volume has not been adopted in histories of Arabic literature. Brockelmann’s *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, which otherwise takes Ahlwardt’s catalogue as its starting point, is almost exclusively period- and author-based. Popular stories in Arabic are mostly preserved in eighteenth and nineteenth-century manuscripts, but their content is timeless (or at least considerably older than the manuscripts in which they are usually preserved),

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emphasises the importance of the collection of Qur’anic fragments on parchment that are also part of the Wetzsteiniana II collection.

12 *Catalog der arabischen Handschriftenbibliothek*, p. 2.

13 Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss*, vol. 8, six unnumbered pages at the beginning of the volume.

14 On 23 April 2017, the number of fully digitised Wetzstein manuscripts online amounted to 216.

and author names are hardly ever recorded. In the rare cases where the author is given, there is no guarantee that the information is authentic. For Brockelmann, all this was apparently sufficient reason to simply ignore this popular literature almost entirely, despite it accounting for several thousands of volumes on the shelves in Berlin alone.<sup>15</sup> Brockelmann's decision to ignore this large segment of Arabic literature has been detrimental to the study of popular Arabic literature (though others have tried to fill this lacuna<sup>16</sup>). That may be an extra incentive for the study of the Arabic popular stories, which are described by Ahlwardt in such great detail, and are used so sparingly in Arabic scholarship.<sup>17</sup>

### 3 Ideas for a Typology

A tentative typology of manuscripts with popular stories in the Wetzstein collections takes the following contours. Volume eight of Ahlwardt's catalogue contains a description of the narrative literature in prose. This comprises nos. 8952–9066 (legends and stories of conversion), nos. 9067–9107 (shorter stories) and nos. 9108–9361 (long stories). Ahlwardt provides an abstract for all these texts, which makes his catalogue a primary source for a literary history in itself, even more so than is already the case for the other volumes of his catalogue.

A count of the first section, legends and stories of conversion, in Ahlwardt's volume reveals a total of c. 160 texts, of which seventy-six come from Wetzstein's second collection, and the rest from ten other collections, of which the first and second Petermann collections and the Sprenger collection are the most conspicuous (with fifteen, thirty-three and twenty-one texts, respec-

15 Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, Leiden, Brill, 1937–1942 (*Supplement* 1, II, III) and 1943–1949 (*Geschichte* 1, II), mentions popular stories in *Geschichte* II, pp. 62–63, *Supplement* II, pp. 59–65, where they are treated as somehow connected to the *Arabian Nights*.

16 Regarding this connection, I mention with gratitude the generous bibliographical help that I received from Dr Ibrahim Akel in Paris, when, in the course of 2015, I took my first steps in the field of research into Arabic popular stories. He maintains the sort of bibliography that Brockelmann could have produced. My acquaintance with Dr Akel dates from the Wetzstein conference of 2015.

17 As an *excursus* from my research on manuscripts in general, I have recently indulged in working on the content of this sort of material. See my “King Šābūr and the gazelle. An Oriental story from the Maghreb”, in *A life with the Prophet? Examining Hadīth, Sira and Qur'an* [= *Bonner Islamstudien*, 38], ed. Albrecht Fuess and Stefan Weninger, Berlin, EBVerlag, 2017, pp. 85–118.

tively). Ahlwardt's second section, shorter stories, contains some fifty-one texts, of which twenty-eight come solely from Wetzstein's second collection. For the third section, the long stories, a much larger proportion seems to come from Wetzstein's second collection, but the difficulties of gathering statistics are compounded by the fact that one story may be contained in a large number of volumes, and vice versa, one volume containing more than one story. For the 'Antar cycle, to give but one example, the second Wetzstein collection is represented with 178 parts and twenty-six fragments, the Sprenger collection with ninety-nine parts, whereas six more parts originate from three other collections. It is my impression that the greater part of the long stories is preserved in manuscripts of the second Wetzstein collection only.

In order to generate material on which I could base some of my ideas, I created a small corpus of manuscripts from the Wetzstein collection in the Staatsbibliothek. A list of these is provided in the Appendix. My first criterion for inclusion in this corpus was that the selected manuscripts should contain specific information about their copyists and the period in which they worked. It may seem strange that I would seek such features in a type of manuscript that is characterised by a general lack of precise information about origin in terms of time and place. That I have done so nevertheless is in order to have at least some grasp of time, place and individual copyists and owners. From June 2014 onwards, I visited the Staatsbibliothek on several occasions to compose and study this corpus of manuscripts with popular stories from the Wetzstein collection. I took it as my sample of the whole and arrived at a number of observations.

Arabic manuscripts with popular stories have much in common with other Arabic manuscripts, but it is the differences that are my focus here. These stories are not part of the established literary and scholarly canon, which has consequences for their outward and physical appearance. A general impression is that they are 'simple' manuscripts made by and for 'simple' people. Their non-canonical content means that they fall outside the strict rules that scholars and literati have devised for the transmission of texts. One will not find, for example, sets of reading certificates, such as those encountered in *Ḥadīth* manuscripts, and, exceptionally, the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (the literary Arabic prose text par excellence).<sup>18</sup> Texts such as the *Maqāmāt* belong to an entirely different stratum of society.

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18 See, for instance, Pierre A. MacKay, *Certificates of transmission on a manuscript of the Maqāmāt of Ḥarīrī* (Ms. Cairo, Adab 105), Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1971.

What further strikes the reader of popular stories is the language in which they are couched. It is not the Arabic that one learns at school or university, but a deviation “from the Classical norm in written texts”.<sup>19</sup> “Classical Arabic” or “Modern Standard Arabic” is nobody’s mother tongue. It has a normative grammar, telling the speaker or writer how he *should* use this artificial language. Those scribes who recorded the stories of the popular story books apparently had little knowledge of these grammatical prescriptions, or they simply could not care less. They wrote in their own living language, which must be called Arabic as well, but which distinguishes itself in many ways from *al-Luġa al-Fuṣḥā*, the official, literally the “most eloquent”, Arabic language.<sup>20</sup> At first sight, the free orthography of the written versions of popular stories strikes the reader as antinomical, or even anarchistic. One has to consider, however, that the stories were recorded outside the usual channels of transmission. I doubt whether there would be any established *Faqīh*, *Allāma*, *Adīb*, *Kātib*, *Nāsiḥ*, *Šāriḥ* or *Muḥaššī* who would write in this way, because such language is, according to the rules of normative grammar, incorrect, faulty, corrupt even, whereas descriptive grammarians would consider it only as “different” from the norm. This attitude, still very much alive today among Arab scholars, can sometimes result in curious paradoxes. Supposed mistakes in the manuscripts are silently corrected and authentic examples of the living Arabic language are contaminated or even destroyed by a misguided sense of normalisation.

An example of this is the work by the Tunisian scholar Maḥmūd Ṭaršūna on his edition of *Kitāb Miʿat Layla wa-Layla*, the “One-hundred-and-one Nights”, a framework for a number of stories. Ṭaršūna bases his edition on two manuscripts, one in Paris (Arabe 3662) and the other in Tunis National Library (no. 4576), but he frequently corrects the text according to his own ideas about the language in which the stories are presented. Inevitably, this leads to curious cases of hyper-correction, including the introduction of morphological features (for example, the use of the *dualis* of verbal forms) that do not exist anywhere else in the manuscripts. About his handling of his text, Ṭaršūna says:

19 Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, Second edition, Edinburgh, University Press, 2014, p. 152. In the present context, Versteegh’s chapter on “Middle Arabic” (*ibid.*, pp. 152–171) is particularly useful. An older work on this, which is still useful, is Johann Fück, *Arabīya. Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte*, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1950, especially pp. 57–62. However, Versteegh, Fück and others largely ignore the mass of linguistic information present in the collections of popular stories.

20 Versteegh, *The Arabic Language*, p. vii, calls the opposition between these two varieties of Arabic “the major theme” of his book.

“We have maintained the language and the idiom of the book and we have only permitted ourselves to correct the numerous grammatical mistakes.”<sup>21</sup> This is opening the gate to an influx of unhistorical and contaminated language at best, to the trivialisation of the wording of texts at worst. All this usually goes unnoticed, as these “mistakes” are not given in a critical apparatus, nor listed as *emendenda* – they are simply passed over in silence. Such normative behaviour can go largely unnoticed on the morphological level, because that is easy to normalise, but on the syntactical level there is no way to disguise the differences.<sup>22</sup> Predictably, in that case, the ignorant or sloppy copyists get the blame. As wrong and incorrect as their work may be according to the normative philologist, it is nevertheless a form of the living language of the storytellers that is given by the copyists of the manuscripts. Taken together, the corpus of popular literature is a huge reservoir of non-normalised, non-*fushā* versions of Arabic. Against the widespread normalisation, diplomatically edited examples of the language as presented in the manuscripts of popular stories are a rarity that one should welcome rather than suppress.

It seems that for popular stories and poetry, texts are more or less safe in the hands of folklorists, rather than with the philologists. Their sources are sound recordings, not manuscripts, and I have the impression that they keep the non-standard language elements better intact than philologists do.<sup>23</sup> In the long run, however, the administration and the preservation of the folklorists' sound archives is very different from that of manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> Yet, handling the texts in the way that Maḥmūd Ṭaršūna and friends do seems to be less of an issue when sound recordings are the primary source of an edition.

For the editing of popular stories from a tradition of multiple manuscripts, new strategies have to be thought out. If the number of manuscripts is not too large, one could think of a synoptical presentation. Surely, the elaborate

21 Maḥmūd Ṭaršūna (ed.), *Kitāb Mi'at Layla wa-Layla*, Libiyā-Tūnis, al-Dār al-'Arabiyya lil-Kitāb, AH1399/1979, p. 11.

22 Numerous examples on both morphology and syntax are given by I. Schen, “Usama Ibn Munqidh's Memoirs: some further light on Muslim Middle Arabic” (Part 1), *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 17 (1972), pp. 218–236. Part II: *ibid.*, 18 (1973), pp. 64–97.

23 Sa'd 'Abdallāh al-Ṣuwayān, already early on, gives some attention to archiving, e.g. in his *Ġam' al-Ma'tūrāt al-Ṣafahiyya*, Al-Dawḥa, Markaz al-Turāt al-Ša'bi, 1985, pp. 46–49. The technical specifications in that book are now entirely outdated, but the point is that he mentions the importance of organised institutional storage.

24 *Oral Tradition* 28/1 of October 2013 is devoted to “Archives, Databases, and Special Collections”. <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/28ii> (last accessed on 22 November 2016).

theories of textual criticism of the Lachmannian philologists do not apply to this material.<sup>25</sup> This is not confined to the study of Arabic popular stories, as can be shown with a quotation from an entirely different field of the humanities, medieval Irish literature:

This view of the development of medieval texts as deterioration and corruption rests on two assumptions: first, that the basic text must have been a kind of copyright-protected product that careless tradition bearers corrupted by prolonged use, and second, that there must have been an *Urtext*, an extended written form on which a stemma could be anchored, rather than a floating multiform tradition, such as we find in the modern oral-derived cultures [...]. These two assumptions are the bequest of classical to medieval studies, and of the linguistic method of internal reconstruction to the study of literary texts, or, rather, works of verbal aesthetics, since they need not have been composed in writing. There is no way of proving or disproving these assumptions.<sup>26</sup>

Copyists of Arabic popular stories have the idea that they must reveal a good text, and therefore they frequently note in their colophons that the delivered text is without *Ziyāda* or *Nuqṣān*, “without additions or omissions”, and also that it is *bi-l-Tamām wa-l-Kamāl*, “absolutely complete” – which demonstrates an inclusive attitude. This should not be interpreted as a reference to the phenomenon of variant readings, which may be dealt with using Lachmannian textual criticism. Nor is it possible to construct a stemma on the basis of the undoing of *Ziyāda* or *Nuqṣān*. Finding the “real” author or the “true” version of

25 On Lachmannianism, see Paolo Trovato, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method. A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text*, Padua, libreriauniversitaria.it edizioni, 2014. Also see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, ed. and tr. by Glenn W. Most, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 2005 (the first Italian edition is of 1981). Neither Trovato nor Timpanaro, however, discuss texts in which genealogical reconstructionism is impossible, although Timpanaro comes close with the implications of his term “horizontal transmission”, which he believes is a form of contamination (*Genesis*, p. 129, 176). I have ventured into this field as well with my “The Philologist's Stone. The Continuing Search for the Stemma”, *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 6 (July 2013), pp. 34–38.

26 Hildgard L.C. Tristram, “Eduard Rudolf Thurneysen (1857–1940)”, in *Medieval Scholarship. Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*. Vol. 2. *Literature and Philology*, ed. Helen Damico, with Donald Fennema and Karmen Lenz, New York, London, Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998, pp. 201–213, here p. 211. The quotation is a summary of Thurneysen's ideas.

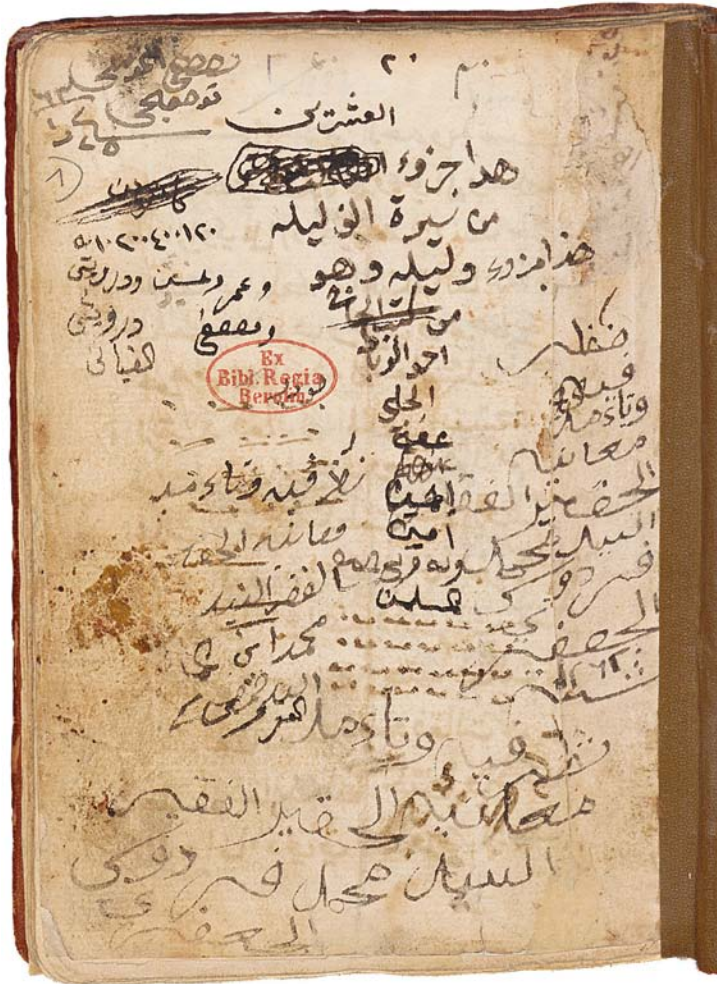


FIGURE 7.1 A manuscript of popular stories with its owners and readers.

Title-page of Part 20 (number corrected) of a section of the *Arabian Nights*, here called *Sirat Alf Layla wa-Layla*. The owner is mentioned in the title where usually an author would be mentioned: *al-Ḥāǧǧ Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī*, and (added at the left) ‘Umar and Ḥasan and Darwiš al-Qabbānī. Top left: another owner or reader: Mušṭafā al-Mawsilī Tū ... ḡī (?) on 25 r1 (= Rabī al-Awwal) of AH[12]63/1847. Repeated reader’s note (also given on text pages): Muḥammad Firdaws al-Ġa’farī AH1262/1845–1846. Another reader: Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al- ... (?). The expression *naẓara fīhi wa-ta’ammala ma’ānīhi*, “has looked in it and has considered its content”, is formulaic for a reader’s note.

STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG,  
WETZSTEIN II 1082 (WE. 1082), F. 1A

٤٠  
 وما تصغي بهذه الاغراض فقالت له اصنعهم  
 زنار جزايري عال فهو مكوفه مثنائيه  
 دنائير فقام حذوا اجتمع باهه واجرها  
 بالخبر فديرت له بعشرة دنائير فاه خذهم  
 وسار الي ما امرته به واشترى الاغراض  
 وجاء بهم اليها فاه خذتهم وبردت تشغل  
 فيهم فيما مضت كماله الجرعه الا والزنار  
 خالص فقالت له يا حن خذ هذه الزنار  
 وعلقه عندك في الدكان ولا تبعه  
 الا باربعين دينار لازود ولا تقص  
 ولكن لا تبعه الا لمن يكون له وطن  
 في بغداد ولا تبيع ابد العاجو سبيل  
 ولو يعطيك امثل مثلين وثلاثه واربع  
 فقال سمعاً وطاعاً فاه خذها وسار  
 الي الدكان وعلقه في باب الدكان

FIGURE 7.2 A text page of the same manuscript as fig. 7.1. Part 20 of a section of the *Arabian Nights*, *Sīrat Alf Layla wa-Layla: Hikāyat Ḥasan al-Ġawharī*. Reader's note by Muḥammad Firdaws al-Ga'farī, with the year AH 1262/1845–1846 in the upper margin

a clearly defined text is irrelevant in what one may call the “fluid tradition” of popular stories. If authors are mentioned at all, they are mythical. There is never a single author of a story. Successful popular stories are changing all the time. That is why in this field of study inventories of themes have come into being.<sup>27</sup> In the popular story literature the owners or collectors of manuscripts sometimes tend to acquire a position of authority in the transmission of a story, even more than the copyists. This can be seen on some of the title-pages of some of the manuscripts in the Wetzstein collection, for instance, MS Berlin, We. 1082, f. 1a (see figs. 7.1 and 7.2).<sup>28</sup> Reading and re-reading the numerous versions of stories, as I have done with those Wetzstein popular texts selected for my sample, I could not escape the conclusion that the old philological approach to this material is futile. Maḥmūd Ṭaršūna’s destructive work on the *Kitāb Miʿat Layla wa-Layla* makes this clear as well.

#### 4 The Social Backgrounds of People Involved

These “simple” manuscripts with popular stories sometimes contain the names of copyists, owners and readers with an indication of their professions. This tells us about their station in life, and it shows where in society there was interest in and use of the popular stories. In the small corpus that I constructed to facilitate my research on the Wetzstein II collection, I came across a number of references to professions among copyists, owners and readers:

- *Al-ʿAqqād*, seller of cords (We. 641, f. 41b)
- *Al-Baqqāl*, the greengrocer (We. 1736, f. 139b)
- *Fayyāl*, ? (We. 1082, f. 29a), or maybe *Qabbāl*?
- *Al-Furnġī*, the baker (We. 741, inside front cover), or possibly to be read as *al-Firanġī*, the Frank
- *Al-Ġabbān*, the cheese merchant (We. 702, f. 95b; We. 1020, f. 66a)

27 See Hasan M. El-Shamy, *Folk Traditions of the Arab World. A Guide to Motif Classification*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1995 (two vols.) and Hasan M. El-Shamy, *Types of the Folktale in the Arab World. A demographically oriented tale-type index*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004. The anchor in this field is, of course, the Aarne-Thompson classification system.

28 The subject has been extensively dealt with by Boris Liebrecht, “The library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt. Books and their audience in 12th to 13th/18th to 19th century Syria”, in *Marginal perspectives on Early Modern Ottoman culture: Missionaries, Travellers, Booksellers*, ed. Ralf Elger and Ute Pietruschka, Halle, Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Regionalstudien, 2013, pp. 17–59.

- *Al-Ḥādiq*, the skilled person? (We. 560, f. 137b), maybe not a specifically professional indication
- *Al-Ḥaffār*, the stone mason (We. 522, title-page; We. 678, f. 117a)
- *Al-Ḥakawātī*, the storyteller (We. 741, f. 88b, copyist; We. 1034, f. 138a, copyist), see also *al-Ḥammāmī*
- *Al-Ḥallāq*, the barber (We. 803, f. 22a, copyist)
- *Al-Ḥammāmī al-Ḥakawātī*, the owner of a bath house who is also the storyteller (We. 1034, f. 138a, copyist)
- *Al-Ḥaššāš*, the *ḥašiš* (or hay) merchant (We. 741, f. 88b)
- *Al-Ḥallāṣī*, the receiver (We. 560, f. 137b)
- *Al-Ḥayyāt*, the tailor (We. 171, vol. 2, f. 1a)
- *Muʿaddib wa-Muʿallim al-Atfāl*, the educator and teacher of children [in Alexandria] (We. 1085a, f. 184b)
- *Qabbāl?* see *Fayyāl*, above
- *Al-Qaṣṣās*, the shearer, or the popular story teller (We. 702, f. 13b, see fig. 7.3)
- *Al-Qaṭṭān*, the cotton merchant (We. 702, f. 74a; We. 830, f. 40a)
- *Šayḥ al-Qaṭṭāna*, the head of the cotton merchants (We. 702, f. 69b, see fig. 7.4)
- *Al-Rabbāt* = ? (We. 522, cover; We. 561, f. 1a; We. 641, f. 1a; We. 702, f. 74a, We. 1082, f. 1a)<sup>29</sup>
- *Al-Safarḡalātī*, the quince merchant (We. 561, f. 1a)
- *Al-Šawīš*, the police sergeant (We. 561, f. 60b)
- *Al-Tanakḡarī*, the tinsmith (We. 641, f. 41b)<sup>30</sup>
- *Al-Tarrās*, the shield-maker (We. 171, vol. 5, f. 1a)
- *Al-Zaytī*, the oil merchant (?) (We. 171, vol. 5, f. 121a)

Apart from the *Qaṣṣās*, ‘the popular storyteller’, the *Muʿaddib wa-Muʿallim al-Atfāl*, ‘the educator and teacher of children’ and the *Ḥakawātī*, ‘the storyteller’, the above professions are not directly connected with the transmission or presentation of popular stories. I have the impression that the mention of professions is a feature that is largely missing in the manuscripts of the more ‘official’ literature. This may point at a use of popular stories within other professional strata of society, in particular among members of the guilds.

Other indicators can be found in the corpus as well, such as birth notes (We. 707, f. 44b) or notes on other familial events. How far the presence of such notes

29 See on Aḥmad al-Rabbāt’s library Boris Liebrecht, “‘Mit Gold nicht aufzuwiegen’: Der Wert von Büchern im osmanischen Syrien (11.–13. / 17.–19. Jahrhundert)”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 164 (2014)3, pp. 653–686, here 674–677.

30 Or to be understood as *al-Tunbakḡī*, ‘the tobacco merchant’ (as in We. 559; reference kindly provided by Boris Liebrecht)?

ولكن الكسول في حجة براءة لبيبي وبينه فكتبوا  
 وأخذ القاضي الحجة وأخذ السارق المالا فاعتم  
 القاضي أكثر من الأول فوالت له زوجته علي  
 صوت يسفك أخذ بالليل استعكرك وبغلتك  
 والآن اتى الى محلك وبنت حلك واتخذ منك  
 العين رينار موتك اخبر من حيلتك فقال  
 بها اسكتي يا بنت الحلال واحمري المول  
 الذي ما تعرض لك بسوء قالت وكيف تعرض  
 لي قال لها يا طلب يدعي انك جارية وتبيك  
 بالوحارث القاطع والاربات  
 الشائعه وياخذ مني غصبا  
 ولو كنتي بنت الحسين  
 ابن علي فتعجب من  
 قول القاضي  
 وكنت  
 وهذا ما اتهم اليكم قصة القاضي والراي بالهمام  
 وحرر ذلك في مجاد الكلا  
 بكتوبها كاتبا الفقير  
 بركة القضاة  
 صلوات

FIGURE 7.3 Colophon of the “Story of the Judge and the Thief” written in a rather free orthography, giving as date of copying 6 Ġumād II 1243 (1827), by copyist Bakrī (?) al-Qaṣṣāš (“the shearer” or “the popular storyteller”) Ṣalḥāḥ (?). Formula commonly used in colophons of story telling texts (but not only there), as if the copyist is just the receiver of the story: *wa-hādā mā intahā ilaynā min Qiṣ-ṣat al-Qāḍī wa-l-Harāmī bi-l-tamām* (wa-l-kamāl), “and this is what came down to us [...]”

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II 702 (WE. 702), F. 13B

الطتام الملك فضر به ضرا وجيحا واخذ جميع ما كان  
 معه ووضع في الحبس ولما كان الليل اتت اليه  
 احييه وقالت له اتم اشكر عنده فم شبح ثم انها  
 ذهبت الى ابن الملك والتفت نحو رقبته فساء  
 الولد فاما ابوه فغزة عليه فهرب وانت و  
 ولقت نحو رقبته الولد وقالت لم اخرج حتى  
 خرجوه من الغيب الطالح من الحبس والاقتلته  
 قال فامر الملك ف اخرج فاشرفه الى تدامه ففقد  
 ذهبت احييه فاجلسه الملك الى جانبه وقال  
 له مراديين ان تخبرني في خبرك ففقدتها اخبرني  
 جميع ما فعل وكيف طالع من البير هو وانتم  
 والقرود واجيه وكيف قال لا تظالعه ونهه  
 فقال له الملك صدق النور والقرود واجيه ثم انه  
 امر بطلب الرجل واكرم ذكره وخيره ان يقبض  
 عنده فابا وياض الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم  
 ولا نوم له طام في السموات وما في الارض من ذلك الذي يتبع قومه الا باذنه قلتم  
 وحك انه كان في بني اسرائيل رجلا وهو كثير  
 الصدقة فلما انه مات تصدقت زوجته بجميع  
 ماله واقتت الودها ما تبني درهم ولما كبر الولد  
 ادبهم وما ظنهم ولا يحطون ببني قومه اجمع الا ما اخبرته  
 شاء وسع عليه السموات وما في الارض ولا يورده حفظهما وهو  
 اعلي العظمى

نظر فيه وتاملها ما نبهه الحقير الفقيه الراجي عفو ربه الصديق الكبير الدير درويش بن  
 شيخ القطانه خفر الله له وتكل امسها بين اجمعين فومن يعز له الفاقحة اصابه ياريت العالمين  
 دارويش بن الفقرة عامر بصغور بن وادار علي بن سليمان ونظر الله في القليلين في كل يوم  
 في كل سنة

FIGURE 7.4 A professional indication in a note of readership. A lengthy reader's note in the margin, written by al-Sayyid Darwiš b. al-Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahmān, the *Šayḥ al-Qaṭṭāna*, the head of the cotton merchants, dated 29 *Muharram* 1253 (1836) STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, WETZSTEIN II 702 (WE. 702), F. 69B

is relevant to an assessment of the social status of the owners of a book needs further research.<sup>31</sup>

### Appendix: the Corpus

To begin my research in Wetzstein's popular stories I composed, with Ahlwardt's volume eight as a point of departure, a corpus of what I considered to be relevant manuscripts. This comprises the manuscripts in the list below, all of which I studied by autopsy during my visits to Berlin in 2014–2015. None of the manuscripts mentioned below is a so-called *Ḥakawātī* manuscript with text written in large script, a feature that would facilitate declamation by a professional storyteller.<sup>32</sup>

In 2009, I had such a storyteller's reciting manuscript in my hands, not in Berlin but among the stock of Mr Herman Bouwman, an antiquarian bookseller in Groenekan, the Netherlands. Mr Bouwman has meanwhile suspended his activities. Some of my notes on this manuscript were once on Mr Bouwman's website, where it was registered as Arab. 357. It was sold and its present whereabouts is unknown to me. At the time I described the manuscript, which featured an illustration, as follows:

Collective volume with texts in Arabic, European laid paper, 20×14.5 cm, f. 6–34 + 1–35 f., text written in large *nash* script with *ruq'a* features, 13 lines to the page, paper pasted boards. There is an owner's seal by Ġa'far Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Madanī on f. 6a. An owner, who appears to be the copyist, has written his name and address on the first leaf of either part: Muḥammad Luṭfī al-Rahunġī, owner of al-Maktaba al-Adabiyya in Sūq al-Miskīn (town not mentioned). The manuscript is possibly a single volume from a set of reading books of a *Ḥakawātī*, a professional storyteller (hence the large script?). On the last page of the volume an owner or reader has made a drawing in pencil, representing the protagonist of the stories, al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars, whose *Sīra* is based on the legends around the Mamlūk Sulṭān Baybars I, who reigned from 1260–1277. One may imagine that the image was also used during the performance of the *Ḥakawātī*.

31 *Ibn al-Ma'tūq*, "the son of the manumitted slave" (We. 702, f. 23a). This should not necessarily be interpreted in the sense that the father of this person was himself a manumitted slave. In Morocco, for instance, "Matoug" is a common family name and carries no implication of the lexicographical meaning of the word *Ma'tūq*.

32 Aḥmad al-Laḥḥām, the storyteller in Maqḥā al-Nawfara in Damascus, can be seen with a manuscript, or sometimes with a photocopy of a manuscript, in his hands on the numerous recent (2015) photographs of him that can be found in Google images following the use of the search terms "damascus storyteller".

As for the contents of the volume I noted:

(1) *Kitāb* 16 of the *Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir* (Baybars), with a summary of the content written on the title-page; (2) the continuation of the preceding text, also *Kitāb* 16. The division into two of the text may reflect the amount of text read aloud during one session.

Most manuscripts in the corpus that I composed from the Wetzstein collection in Berlin date from the first half of the nineteenth century. They may have been only one or at best two generations of owners old.<sup>33</sup> Serial numbers are written on many manuscripts. It was not always clear to me whether these indicate a certain order of the episodes in a larger cycle, or whether they are classmarks given to the volumes by their owners.

Collection Wetzstein I:

- We. 171, volumes 1–11 (Ahlwardt 9156 (2), (10), (3), (11), (1), (4), (5), (7), (6), (8), (9) respectively): episodes of *Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*

Collection Wetzstein II:

- We. 388 (Ahlwardt 9070, 5): *Qiṣṣat Tamīm al-Dārī*. Old and atypical manuscript
- We. 440 (Ahlwardt 9149): *Dū al-Himma wa-l-Baṭṭāl*
- We. 522 (Ahlwardt 9108): part 2 of *Sīrat al-Anqā bt. Bahrāmġūr*
- We. 560 (Ahlwardt 9147): *Kitāb Tuḥfat al-Ṣudūr wa-Anqā bt. al-Riḥ wa-Anqā bt. Bahrām(ġūr)*
- We. 561 (Ahlwardt 9155, vol. 8, pp. 114–115): *Sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir* (Baybars)
- We. 627 (Ahlwardt 9119): part 4 of *Sīrat al-Malik Sayf*
- We. 641 (Ahlwardt 9120): part 9 of *Sīrat al-Malik Sayf b. Ḍa'l-Yazan*
- We. 662 (Ahlwardt 9103; Ahlwardt 9104). *Dīwān, Šāhid Kalām, Nukta wa-Šāhid min Nawādir al-Luṣūṣ*, and several other stories (see fig. 7.5)
- We. 678 (Ahlwardt 9169): *Min Sīrat Ğawdar*
- We. 702, A collective volume, texts in order of occurrence in the volume:
  - Ahlwardt 9077, 1: *Qiṣṣat al-Qāḍī wal-Ḥarāmī*
  - Ahlwardt 8978, 2: *Qiṣṣat Ahl al-Kahf*

33 We can rule out the possibility that the manuscripts were commissioned by Wetzstein. Many came from the library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt, who was operating before Wetzstein arrived in Damascus. See Liebreuz, “The Library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt”; Liebreuz, *Die Rifāʿiya aus Damaskus. Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*. Leiden, Brill, 2016, pp. 228–235.

50

البلد من ايت على القاهره و فرقه حمر فعلت نه يهودي و جاتني يوم  
 الاحد و عادة اليهود ان يكلو يوم السبت كثير افينا نتجو افعالهم ظلمها  
 ونظما ان لا يعوج الي الطب ولا تزوج امره اشرف منه واعطاه  
 ما لا يبريلوا من ان يعود الي الحياكه وليس هذا باجيب من حديث الرجلين  
 المحتالين الذي هتات كل واحد منهما على صاحبه فلما سمع الملك مثلا  
 تحت ذلك العجبه فامر الوزير ان ينصرف الي منزله فبات واجب فلما  
 امسا المساملس مكانه على جاري عاده و طلب الوزير من محضرين  
 يدريه فقال له هات حديثي حديث الرجلين المحتالين **قال نعم**  
**قيلت العشر** من عن ايها الملك السعيد انه كان في مدينة الصدين  
 رجل محتال ادخل اهلك الناس بحيله واشتهر في الافاق وانه اراد السفر  
 فحمل حملا من بعر الغنم واقسم انه لا يعود من سفر حتى يبسعه بسبع  
 الزبيب وكان في مدينة الري محتال اخر من اهلها في مثل حيله وانه  
 اراد السفر فحمل حملا من بعر الجمال واقسم انه لا يعود حتى يبسعه بسبع الخبز

عليه ينقر العباد وهو هم اسم **سبب** هـ  
 التي رحمة المحتال المنان هـ  
 السد سيد  
 الرزاق ابن  
 السد سيد  
 الكشم  
 المصري  
 الهذلي  
 احد  
 وانت

الله

FIGURE 7.5 The colophon of the collection of the “Twenty Nightly Stories” mentions the copyist, ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Miṣrī. No date is given. The *Šāhid* at the left of the colophon is the beginning of the next story in the volume. *Šāhid* means here “a true story”.

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- Ahlwardt 3999, 1: Stories, fragments poetry and prose, not in Ahlwardt vol. 8
- Ahlwardt 9186, 1: *Ḥikāyat al-Ḥalīfa al-Sammāk ma'a al-Ḥalīfa Hārūn al-Rašīd*
- Ahlwardt 9052, 4: *Qiṣṣat al-Ḥaġġāġ wa-l-Ġulām*
- Ahlwardt 9052, 4: *Ḥikāya Laṭīfa lahā Ma'nā liman yafhamu*
- Ahlwardt 9085: *Qiṣṣat 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ma'a Salmī*
- Ahlwardt 9059: *Qiṣṣat Masrūr ma'a Zayn al-Muwāṣiḥ*
- Ahlwardt 9172: Incomplete copy (abrupt end) of *Qiṣṣat Aḥmad al-Danif*
- Ahlwardt 8993 (2): *Qiṣṣat Miqdād*
- Ahlwardt 9054 (2): *Sīrat al-Bakrī*
- Ahlwardt 8989 (2): *Ġazāt Banī al-Nazīr wa-mā fihā min al-'Aġā'ib*
- Ahlwardt 8989 (2): *Ġazāt Banī al-Nazīr wa-mā fihā min al-'Aġā'ib*
- Ahlwardt 9021: *Qiṣṣat al-Imām 'Alī [...] ilā al-Ḥiṣn al-Azraq*
- Ahlwardt 9005 (2): *Sīrat al-Imām 'Alī [...] wa-Ḥalīd b. al-Walīd*
- Ahlwardt 9020 (2): *Ġazwat Bīr Ma'ūna*
- Ahlwardt 9020 (1): *Sīrat al-Imām 'Alī [...] ilā al-Muqaḥḥa' Ibn al-Marsi' wa-Ibnatihi Qatām*
- Ahlwardt 9019: *Ġazwat al-Imām 'Alī 'alā 'Abd Habbār b. 'Abd Zaynġir*
- Ahlwardt 9179: *Qiṣṣat Tawaddud*
- Ahlwardt 9084 (2): *Qiṣṣat Zayd wa-Kaḥlā*
- We 707. Ahlwardt 9087: *Kitāb al-Samar fīhi Ḥikāyat al-Ṣayyād wa-l-Qumqum wa-l-Samak al-Muġannī wa-l-Malik wa-Ibn al-Tāġir wal-Ṭilas*
- We. 741 (Ahlwardt 8986): *Ḥadīhi Ġazwat al-Farġ ... ma'a al-Nabī ...*
- We. 754 (Ahlwardt 9192): *Banī Hilāl, Dīwān al-Aws*
- We. 756 (Ahlwardt 9196): *Banī Hilāl, Dīwān Ġābir wa-Ġubayr, part 2*
- We. 764 (Ahlwardt 9220): *Banī Hilāl, Dīwān al-Kawkabī*
- We. 765 (Ahlwardt 9222): *Dīwān al-Hiraql*
- We. 767 (Ahlwardt 9228): *Dīwān Ṣabra, Banī Hilāl*
- We. 769 (Ahlwardt 9233): *Dīwān al-Faylasūf*
- We. 777 (Ahlwardt 9255): *Badrān 2, Banī Hilāl*
- We. 780 Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9277): *Dīwān al-Māḍī fī al-Ṣa'īd*
  - (Ahlwardt 9267): *Dīwān al-Ġarkasī*
- We. 781 (Ahlwardt 9280): *Dīwān al-Ġaḍānfar min Sīrat Banī Hilāl*
- We. 783 (Ahlwardt 9355): *Dīwān al-Wiṣāḥī (?)*
- We. 786 (Ahlwardt 9342): *Dīwān 'Ayyāt, Sīrat Banī Hilāl*
- We. 787 (Ahlwardt 9343): *Dīwān 'Ayyāt, Sīrat Banī Hilāl*
- We. 788 (Ahlwardt 9345): *Dīwān 'Ayyāt, Sīrat Banī Hilāl*
- We. 790 (Ahlwardt 9346): *Dīwān Budayr wal-Fawza, Banī Hilāl*
- We. 795 (Ahlwardt 9294): *Dīwān al-Dubaysī, Banī Hilāl*
- We. 797 (Ahlwardt 9300): *Dīwān al-Timurlank, Banī Hilāl*

- **We. 800** Collective volume:
  - *Qiṣṣat Ḥalab al-Ḥuzāʿī* (Ahlwardt 9307)
  - *Dīwān al-Harās fī Qubruṣ* (Ahlwardt 9311)
  - *Dīwān Abū Basššār al-Aṭṭār* (Ahlwardt 9315)
- **We. 803** (Ahlwardt 9351): *Dīwān al-Ġiṭrīf Abū Zayn al-Dār*
- **We. 806** Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9301): *Qiṣṣat ʿĀna maʿa al-Yahūd*
  - (Ahlwardt 9350): *Dīwān al-Amīr Zaydān maʿa Zayn al-Dār*
- **We. 807** (Ahlwardt 9271): *Dīwān Qaṭīyya, Banī Hilāl*
- **We. 808** (Ahlwardt 9274): *Dīwān Miṣr, [Banī Hilāl]*
- **We. 809** (Ahlwardt 9276): *Kalām al-Ḥāḍa wa-Ḥarda, Banī Hilāl*
- **We. 810** Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9269) *Dīwān al-ʿArīš*
  - (Ahlwardt 9198): *Dīwān Qarḍāb al-Šarīf Abū Hāšim*
  - (Ahlwardt 9328): *Dīwān al-Ḥašhīš (Banī Hilāl)*
- **We. 811** (Ahlwardt 9279): *Dīwān Qatlat al-Māḍī (Banī Hilāl)*
- **We. 812** (Ahlwardt 9326): *Dīwān al-Rašrāš (Banī Hilāl)*
- **We. 815** Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9331): *Dīwān Hawlā Umm Naṣr wa-mā ġarā lahā maʿa Ḥarb al-Zanātī (Banī Hilāl)*
  - (Ahlwardt 9333): *Dīwān Qatl al-Zanātī (Banī Hilāl)*
- **We. 816** Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9263): *Dīwān al-Qudsī*
  - (Ahlwardt 9282): *Dīwān al-Ḥarīṭīyya*
- **We. 817** (Ahlwardt 9334): *Dīwān Ġubayna al-Mahraġān wa-ʿAyn Saḥwān (Banī Hilāl)*
- **We. 818** (Ahlwardt 9335): *Banī Hilāl, part 83, wa-fīhi Mawt Yaḥyā wa-Marīhī (?) wa-Yūnus wa-Qatl Sulṭān al-Yaman ...*
- **We. 821** (Ahlwardt 9340): *Banī Hilāl, part 86*
- **We. 830** (Ahlwardt 9203): *Dīwān al-ʿĀšīr min Sīrat Banī Hilāl wa-fīhi Kamāl Dīwān al-Ḥaḍrā wa-Barakāt ʿalā al-Tamām*
- **We. 864** (Ahlwardt 9260): *Dīwān Naġd b. ʿAlqam min Sīrat Banī Hilāl*
- **We. 866** (Ahlwardt 9265): *Dīwān al-Ġarkasī*
- **We. 875** (Ahlwardt 9201): *Dīwān al-Ḥaḍrā bt. Qarḍāb al-Šarīf ..., Banī Hilāl*
- **We. 876** (Ahlwardt 9216): *Kitāb Barḍaḥā wa-mā waqaʿa maʿa al-Sulṭān Ḥasan*
- **We. 885** (Ahlwardt 9252): *Dīwān Badrān*
- **We. 892** Collective volume:
  - (Ahlwardt 9293): *Qiṣṣat al-Dabīsī*
  - (Ahlwardt 9297): *Qiṣṣat al-Māriyya*
- **We. 893** (Ahlwardt 9284): *Dīwān May al-Ġāriyya*
- **We. 900** (Ahlwardt 9313): *Dīwān al-Harās fī Qubruṣ*

- We. 985 (Ahlwardt 9124): *Sīrat 'Antar*, part 25
- We. 1020 (Ahlwardt 9124): *Sīrat 'Antar*, part 60
- We. 1034 (Ahlwardt 9125): *Sīrat 'Antar*, part 13
- We. 1082. Ahlwardt 9176: Incomplete copy (lacuna) of *Ḥikāyat Ḥasan al-Ġawharī*, said to be vol. 20 of *Sīrat Alf Layla wa-Layla*
- We. 1085a (Ahlwardt 9128): Part 4 of *Sīrat Abū l-Fawāris 'Antar b. Šaddād al-'Absī*
- We. 1344, 6 (Ahlwardt 9038, 2): *Ḥadīṭ Qatl al-Imām Ḥusayn*
- We. 1723 Collective volume, of which only the last text is a popular story;
  - (Ahlwardt 8995): *Islām Sayyidinā 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abā Bakr al-Šiddīq wa-Zawāḡuhu bil-Baydā bt. al-Malik Sufyān al-'Āmirī*
- We. 1736 Collective volume, of which only the penultimate text is a popular story
  - (Ahlwardt 9032): *Dīwān al-Šayḡ Kamāl al-Dīn b. Nabīh (?)*
- We. 1761 Collective volume with text, of which only two can be considered as popular stories:
  - (Ahlwardt 9004, 2): *Aḡbār 'an Wafāt Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*
  - (Ahlwardt 2525): *Qišṣat Iblīs*

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# The Consul and the King

*Wetzstein and Alexander*

*Faustina Doufikar-Aerts*

## 1 Introduction

The first steps in an untrodden field of research inevitably start by exploring the relevant sources.

For my field of study, the Oriental Alexander tradition, the initial foothold was the Berlin Wetzstein collection of manuscripts.

In this centennial volume dedicated to the memorable contribution to Oriental studies made by Wetzstein, I impart my personal experience: the weal and woe of some twenty-five years of manuscript research. In this survey, I discuss historical ways of cataloguing, classifying and handling manuscripts by highlighting the role of the Prussian consul, Wetzstein, and the king, Alexander of Macedon.

## 2 Arabic Pseudo-Callisthenes

In the 1980s, a footnote in Cary's *The Medieval Alexander* attracted my attention: "D.S. Rice has recently found an Arabic Pseudo-Callisthenes in Constantinople which may prove to be the lost intermediary."<sup>1</sup>

What the historian of Islamic art, David Storm Rice (1913–1962), had found were the Arabic manuscripts Aya Sofya 3003 and 3004, dated AH 871/1466 and AH 881/1476 respectively. The phrase "the lost intermediary" here points to the Arabic version of the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes. This text was, by all accounts, an intermediary to the Syriac and Ethiopic translations of the Romance. Both the Syriac text, probably translated around 600, and the Ethiopic, translated between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, have survived and were published with English translations at the end of the nineteenth century. The existence of the Arabic text was also pointed to by many clues, but

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<sup>1</sup> George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, ed. D.J.A. Ross, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 12, note 19.

the text itself was considered to be lost.<sup>2</sup> At the time Cary's book revealed this "discovery", the text was still a missing link.

It is important to realise that the original Greek *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes – *Βίος Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνα* – the *Biography of Alexander of Macedon* – (third century AD) was the fundamental source for Alexander's worldwide heroic reputation in the Middle Ages and that, therefore, the discovery of the Arabic version – the lost link – would have been a spectacular find.

Therefore, this remark in Cary was a startling suggestion, and I decided to order a microfilm of the manuscripts, which were by then part of the Süleymaniye collection in Istanbul. It took, admittedly, some effort to obtain it, but I was aided by information kindly provided to me by Boğaziçi University, and by the mediation of the Cultural Attaché of the Dutch embassy in Ankara, Mr H.C. van Renselaar, who intervened by putting into practice the protocols of the Cultural Agreement between the Netherlands and Turkey, which had just been signed. This was the age of written letters: no internet, no e-mail, and the search for and involvement of people who knew the right people to contact. This was less than thirty years ago.

At last the microfilm arrived by mail at my home address: a microfilm with more than 500 images of 1,044 manuscript pages. It cost me, a student, a small fortune, but I still had no clue about its contents, except for the title, *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, which had been kindly provided to me by Dr Günay Kut.<sup>3</sup>

The title indeed means "The Biography of Alexander", but unfortunately it was not the sought-after Arabic translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*. Rice's suggestion appeared to be wrong. In retrospect, the formidable size of the manuscript itself should have been taken as an indication of this discrepancy. After a preliminary examination, the text did not exhibit the features known from the celebrated Romance and I was left with the question what this intriguing manuscript truly contained – and the urge to investigate it. What kind of text was this so-called biography, *Sīrat al-Iskandar*?

2 See Faustina Doufkar-Aerts, 'A Hero Without Borders: 2 Alexander the Great in the Syriac and Arabic Tradition,' Chapter 7 in *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond* [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, vol. 1], ed. Carolina Cupane and Bettina Krönung, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, pp. 190–209.

3 Her description in full: "*al-cüz'ü 'l-avval min sirati 'l-Iskandar. Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya Collection, Nr. 3003, 262 yk. al-cuzu'l-šanī. Al-Iskandar va mā fi hā mina'l-'acāyib va'l-ğarāyib. Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya Collection. Nr. 3004. 2a–260b.*" Information sent to in a letter by Dr Güneş Kut, Boğaziçi University. See Faustina Doufkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus: A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries* [= Mediaevalia Groningana, n.s. 13], Louvain, Peeters, 2010, p. 235.

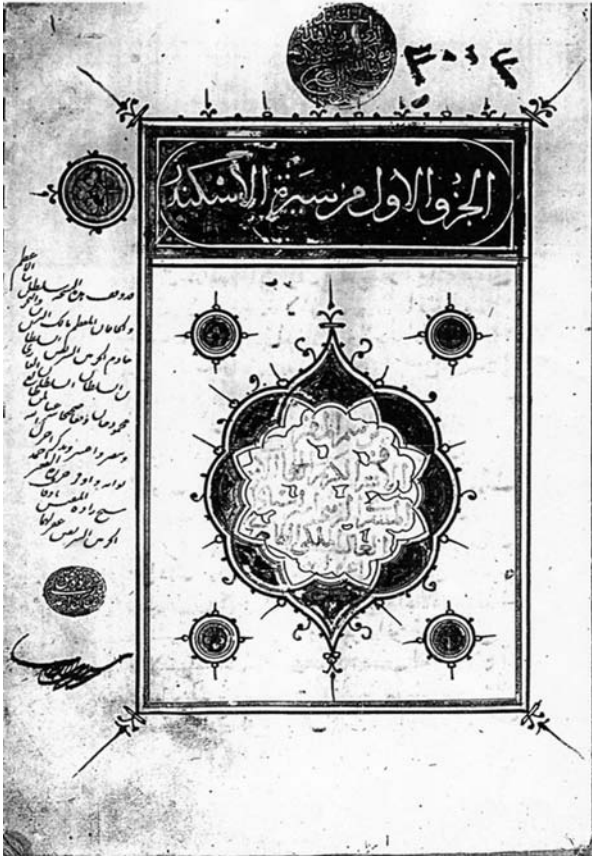


FIGURE 8.1 *Sirat al-Iskandar*, Title page  
SÜLEYMANIYE LIBRARY, AYASOFYA COLLECTION,  
NO. 3003

### 3 *Sirat al-Iskandar*

In my initial attempts to identify the text, I read a Utrecht dissertation by Pieter van Leeuwen, entitled *De Maleische Alexanderroman*. In this thesis from 1937 Van Leeuwen described the Malay *Hikāyat Iskandar Zulkarnain* and gave a summary of the text in Dutch. In his introduction, he stated that the Malay story seemed very close to a text entitled *Sirat al-Iskandar*, which he had found in the library in Berlin. There it was part of the collection of manuscripts brought to Berlin from Damascus by Johann Gottfried Wetzstein. This remark put me on the trail of the Wetzstein collection.

This present centennial volume commemorates the fact that Wetzstein, during his sojourns as consul of Prussia in Damascus in the middle of the nine-

teenth century, assembled an impressive collection of Arabic manuscripts, which he brought home, and which are nowadays part of the Oriental collections of the Berlin State Library and Tübingen University Library.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Wetzstein's Arabic manuscripts were catalogued in Ahlwardt's *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. In volume eight of this massive catalogue, dating from 1896, Ahlwardt clustered texts which he called "Grosse Romane". An intriguing title indeed.

#### 4 Catalogue Description of Manuscripts

The classification of these so-called popular romances starts with number 9108, which contains eight manuscripts of the Wetzstein collection, numbers 522–529, called "die romanhafte Geschichte Alexander des Grossen". However, it took over half a century from the compilation of the catalogue before the genre of Arabic popular romances was seriously studied and categorised.<sup>4</sup>

Before going into detail about Ahlwardt's classification, I will first dwell on the fame of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, or rather on its obscurity, during the nineteenth century.

There are reasons to believe that the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* was not among the most popular *siyar* (plur. of *sīra*) in the Middle East at that time. Edward Lane did not mention its recitation in his *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*.<sup>5</sup> The only indications of its circulation were notes by Seetzen – he names it "Sziret Skender" – and von Hammer-Purgstall who mentions that copies of the text had been for sale in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, specimens of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* were purchased which are preserved to this day in European libraries. It may be owing to the interest in other *siyar*, such as *Sīrat 'Antar*, by European collectors that the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* received attention as an object of potential importance. It may also be that Alexander's famous name aroused the curiosity of European purchasers of manuscripts.

4 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, § 5.2, pp. 233–234.

5 Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London, John Murray, 1860. New edition with a new introduction by John Manchip White, New York, Dover Publications, 1973.

6 Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's *Reisen*, ed. Prof. Dr Fr. Kruse, et al., Berlin, 1855, p. 398; Peter Heath, *The Thirsty Sword: Sīrat 'Antar and the Arabic Popular Epic*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1996, p. 4.

Eventually, quite a number of copies appeared in library collections, both in the Middle East and the West, but none of the manuscripts became the subject of serious investigation, and their contents remained obscure. In 1944 Graf wrote in his *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur*, with reference to the Berlin *Sīrat al-Iskandar* manuscripts: “ihr genauer Inhalt ist noch nicht bekannt gemacht.”<sup>7</sup>

In Brockelmann’s *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (1938) the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* is mentioned twice under the category “Unterhaltungsschriften in Prosa, Anthologien und Volksbücher”, with the sole remark “eine Bearbeitung des Alexanderromans”.<sup>8</sup>

The initial modest renown of the epic most likely went back to the descriptions in the catalogues of three important Oriental manuscript collections in the libraries of London, Paris and Berlin.<sup>9</sup> These date from the second half of the nineteenth century.

The information was rudimentary, but just enough to determine that it concerned a group of manuscripts with a similar content. In what follows, I will paraphrase the descriptions of the different catalogues, including some quotations indicated by hyphens, starting with de Slane and MS Paris BNF 3682:

History of Alexander. The author is named “Abou ’l-Faradj al-Ṣoûrî” (الصوري born in Tyre). This copy differs in the beginning from the redaction preserved in the other three subsequent manuscripts and in most of the other known manuscripts. It starts this way, following the *ammā ba’ā*:<sup>10</sup> “The account of the kings to whom God Almighty allowed to justly lead the subjects away from upheavals, and rule them with commendable morals, which are brighter than the light of a lamp, etc.”

The manuscript ends with the words: “This is what came to us from the account of al-Iskandar ibn Dārāb al-Rūmī al-Maqdūnī entirely and com-

7 Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, *Die Übersetzungen*, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944, p. 546.

8 Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, Suppl. Band II, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1938, p. 58 and vol. II, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1949 (2nd ed.), p. 71.

9 William Cureton and Charles Rieu, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Orientalium qui in Museo Briannico asservantur, Pars secunda, codices Arabicos amplectens*, London, The British Museum, 1846, nos. DCCVII–DCCIX, pp. 329–330; William McGuckin le Baron de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1883–1895, pp. 628–629; Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, vol. viii, Berlin, Asher, 1896, pp. 69–73.

10 These words are traditionally used as the introduction to the text in manuscripts, letters etc. In ms. 3682, p. 1b we actually find “*wa-ba’ā*”.

pletely; the manuscript copy of this blessed life story was finished on the fourth of the unique sacred month of Rajab, among the months of the year one thousand and seven etc.”

The description furthermore mentions that the manuscript has up to 360 folios and the date mentioned, the year AH1007/1599, refers only to the last fifty folios of the manuscript.

This remark is probably based on the fact that the last sixty (!) folios are copied in another hand. However, the beginning of the manuscript is also, once again, in another hand. The practice of several copyists working on one manuscript is very common. The date tells us something at least about the *terminus ad quem* of the manuscript, since it is implausible that the preceding parts of the text were written later than the last ones.

The other, similar manuscripts, numbers BNF ar. 3683–3685, are referred to as the “same work” with remarks denoting the variants of the names of the composer or transmitter, “Ibrāhīm ibn Moufarradj” (ar. 3683), “Abou Ishāq al-Moufarradj” (ar. 3684), and two different dates for the manuscript copies, AH1053/1643 (ar. 3683), seventeenth century (ar. 3684) and AH961/1554 (ar. 3685).

The London catalogue by Cureton and Rieu, written in Latin, gives the following information for Ms. BM Add 7366:<sup>11</sup>

“Historia fabulosa Alexandri Magni, dicti الاسكندر ذو القرنين, ‘Al-Iskandar Bicornis’<sup>12</sup> or, the fabulous history of Alexander the Great, called the Two-Horned. The name of the composer of the text is given as Ibrāhīm ibn Mufarrīğ al-Şūrī, who in his introductory words tells the reader that he composed this book about King Alexander’s travels and how he crossed the world from East to West, the Land and the Sea. The catalogue furthermore informs us that a title has been added on the front-page by a later hand: “The Book of the History of al-Iskandar Dū l-Qarnayn [the Two-Horned] al-Rūmī and his *wazīr* (minister) and companion al-Ḥiḍr, peace be upon him.”

The catalogue also gives the text of the end-colophon: “The writing of this blessed copy was finished on Sunday, the nineteenth day of the holy month of Muḥarram, at the beginning of the year one thousand and

<sup>11</sup> Cureton / Rieu, *Catalogus*, no. DCCVII, pp. 329–330.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

ninety-seven, [written] by the pen of a man who is weaker than a fly and lower than dust, Luṭfi al-Şaydāwī.<sup>13</sup>

The date of the copy is given as AH1097/1685 and, judging from the copyist's biography, it was probably made early in his career, in the Lebanon Mediterranean coastal region.

There are two other manuscripts of the text in this collection: MS. BL Add. 7367, which contains the continuation of the text in 7366 copied by the same hand, and MS BL Add. 7368, which is not complete and was copied much later, in the year AH1196/1782, by a scribe named 'Alī b. Bakrī al-Ḥallāq.

The description in the Ahlwardt catalogue states:

“Eliskander d'ū 'lqarnein. [...] Treats the heroic history of Alexander the Great. It is not divided in sections, but often the narration is interrupted by the word *qāla al-rāwī* or transmitter *al-nāqil* [...] by which the continuation of the text is indicated. Big, careless script, not easy to read, without vocalisation. Likewise We 523–529. Copy circa 1240/1824.”<sup>14</sup>

Some sentences from the beginning and the end of the manuscripts are quoted by Ahlwardt in Arabic.

The above catalogue descriptions were preceded, however, by an earlier one, which apparently had remained unnoticed. This concerned manuscript CXXXVI in Stephanus Assemanus' catalogue of the Laurentiana collection in Florence, which was published in 1742.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript here is entitled *Historia Alexandri Magni, ex vulgari traditione Orientalium collecta*. Judging from the fact that the story is qualified as “a popular tradition” and from the name of

13 It is very common among copyists to express their modesty in these extremely humble terms. Şaydāwī refers to a connection with the coastal town of Sidon and may mean actual residence, birth or a family ancestry from the place. Fortunately, Luṭfi al-Şaydāwī, ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Muşṭafā can be identified in Ḥalīl al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar fi A'yān al-Qarn al-Tānī 'Aşar*, ed. by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir Şāhīn, vol. iv, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997, p. 31. He was the head of administration/translation, and *kathūdā* (confidant) to the governor of Sidon, 'Uṭmān Bāşā, known as Ibn Ṭawq, who took Luṭfi with him when he was appointed to Başra in 1150, where Luṭfi was killed as a victim of war that same year.

14 Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, vol. viii, p. 69.

15 Stephanus Assemanus, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mms. orientalium Catalogus*, Florence, Ex Typographio Albiziniiano, 1742, no. CXXXVI, p. 220.

the compiler, “Ibraimo Ben Mofregi, Tyrio, Imamo”, it may be assumed that it also refers to a copy of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*. The onomasticon “Tyrius” for “al-Ṣūrī” refers to the coastal city Tyrus and “Imamus”, *imām*, may be mentioned in the text, but usually in these texts the honorific “al-Ṣayḥ” occurs with al-Ṣūrī’s name. Assemanus suggests that the compiler lived/worked around 1494.<sup>16</sup>

However, the Latin description in the catalogue raises some doubts. Assemanus points only to some general characteristics of Alexander in the Oriental tradition, such as the name “Dulkarnain”, but he also mentions two motifs in the story which are not characteristic of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* at all. Instead, they are particularly representative of the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes. Assemanus makes an allusion to the twelve cities built by Alexander and the fact that he died because he had been poisoned in Babylon. Although confusing, this may be explained by the fact that these elements sometimes can be found as interpolated sections in the manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the description says that the manuscript is in octavo, on silk-like paper (*bombycinus*), and that it has ninety pages. This number would agree more with the size of the *Alexander Romance*, if the text is written in a more or less tight hand, while it would not come anywhere near the size of the manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, which regularly have up to several hundred pages, even up to more than 1,000 at times. This remains confusing, the more so because the data cannot easily be verified. The manuscript appears to be in such fragile state that my request for a microfilm could not be granted by the library.

## 5 Nöldekes Critique

On the whole, this historic bibliographical information did not elucidate sufficiently the contents of the manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, and neither did it reveal specifics about the genre. It is clear that the level of information was very limited, even after the release of the catalogues. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind that the foremost studies assessing the Oriental Alexander tradition had not yet appeared. The editions of the Syriac translation of the *Alexander Romance* (1889) and the Ethiopic version (1896) by Wallis

16 This is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the dates of the Aya Sofya mss., 1466 and 1476, respectively.

17 See Doufekar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 74–76. Also see below, where the number of cities is given as thirteen, and note 35.

Budge were published in the late 1880s and 1890s.<sup>18</sup> The authoritative work by Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, was not published until 1890.

Nöldeke exhaustively used the edition of the Syriac Romance, which had just become available, but he ignored the Wetzstein manuscripts, possibly because he was not aware of their presence in the Berlin collection at the time. He briefly commented, however, on one of the copies of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in the Paris collection, though somewhat grumpily:

Ich rede hier nicht von ganz willkürlichen, an Alexander's Namen geknüpften Geschichten, wie den äthiopischen, [...], oder auch nur so freien Erzählungen seiner Taten, wie sie (nach ein paar Proben zu urtheilen, die mir Zotenberg in gewohnter Liebenswürdigkeit geschickt hat) die Pariser Handschrift 3682 giebt, sondern von einem Werke, in dem trotz aller Abweichungen immer noch Pseudocallisthenes wiederzuerkennen ist, nämlich einer jungen Gestalt des dritten Zweiges γ.<sup>19</sup>

This last remark refers to the seventeenth-century translation by Abū Suwaydān entitled *Tārīḥ al-Iskandar al-Maqdūnī* ("History of Alexander of Macedonia"), also part of the Paris collection.<sup>20</sup> This manuscript contains an Arabic translation of a late Christianised Byzantine offspring of the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>21</sup> The Greek text is known as the Byzantine Prose Alexander Ro-

18 Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, being the Syriac Version: Edited from Five Manuscripts of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, with an English Translation, Accompanied by a Historical Introduction on the Origins and the Various Oriental and European Versions of the Fabulous History of Alexander; with Notes, Glossary, Appendixes, Variant Readings, and Indexes*, Cambridge, University Press, 1889 (reprint Amsterdam, APA-Philo Press, 1976).

*Idem, Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great: Ethiopic Histories of Alexander by the Pseudo-Callisthenes and other Writers*, London, C.J. Clay, 1896.

19 Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* [= Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philosophisch-Historische Classe, vol. xxxviii, no. v], Vienna, F. Tempsky, 1890, p. 54.

20 Ms. BNF arabe 3681. Nöldeke (*supra* 54) called the translator "the Christian priest Joasaph, named Suwaidāt". [= Suwaydān] Indeed, Yuwāṣāf al-Muṣawwer ibn Suwaidān al-ʿUmrānī, also called al-Ḥalabī, is listed among the seventeenth-century Melkite translators in J. Nasrallah, *Contribution à l'étude de la littérature arabe chrétienne*, part 4, Louvain, Peeters, 1983, pp. 210–212, who includes a short overview of his career and works. Yuwāṣāf was also metropolitan of Acra, Sidon, Caesarea in Palestine, and bishop in Tyre and worked together with Christodoulos of Ghaza. He died probably in 1713.

21 See Samir, Khalil Samir, "La version arabe melkite du roman d'Alexandre du Pseudo-Callisthène", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 25 (1999), pp. 55–82.

mance, as distinct from the *Byzantine Alexander Poem*.<sup>22</sup> The *Tārīḥ al-Iskandar* had already been published twice in Beirut in the nineteenth century, but the editions remained practically unknown, including to Nöldeke.<sup>23</sup> The text is distinct from the tradition of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*.

The first remark, about “ganz willkürliche, an Alexander’s Namen geknüpfte Geschichten” relates to the Ethiopic version of the *Alexander Romance*, of which the edition and translation by Wallis Budge appeared six years after Nöldeke’s *Beiträge*, and the above cited manuscript of the Paris collection, 3682, containing the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* ascribed to al-Ṣūrī.

With all due respect for Nöldeke’s great expertise and important contributions to Oriental studies, in this case he completely missed the point. The Ethiopic version is just as much a “history arbitrarily linked to Alexander’s name” as any other of the versions of the *Alexander Romance*, including the Suwaydān translation.

Nöldeke’s criticism of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in the Paris collection, which is depicted as “a free narration of his deeds”, may have led to a lack of interest in this genre of texts for almost a century. Ironically, however, the many manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, not least the Paris copy 3682, have recently been shown to be a goldmine as sources for lost episodes of the Pseudo-Callisthenes’ *Alexander Romance* in Arabic. We will come back to this point below.

## 6 Van Leeuwen and the Wetzstein Collection

Returning to Wetzstein, it is true that the first scholar to refer to the Wetzstein manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in Berlin was Friedländer in *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman* (1913). However, his reference to the Wetzstein manuscripts was limited to a few remarks in the footnotes. As his reference text, he mainly used and referred to the London manuscripts cited above.<sup>24</sup>

22 New edition by Willem J. Aerts, *The Byzantine Alexander Poem*, 2 vols. [= Byzantinisches Archiv, 26], Walter De Gruyter Inc, Boston and Berlin, 2014.

23 *Tārīḥ al-Iskandar al-Maqdūnī al-Yūnānī*, Beirut, al-Maṭba’a al-Waṭāniyya, 1868 and *Tārīḥ Iskandar al-Kabīr wa huwa Iskandar al-Makdūnī al-mulaqqab bi-Ḍī l-Qarnayn*, Beirut, al-Maṭba’a al-Adabiyya, 1886. Further see Doufīkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 17–19.

24 Israel Friedländer, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman: Eine sagengeschichtliche und literarhistorische Untersuchung*, Leipzig and Berlin, Teubner, 1913, pp. 179–191.

More important for the rescuing of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* from oblivion, as we have seen, was Van Leeuwen. His review of the *Sīra* revealed its great value as the underlying source for the Malay *Hikāyat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, which itself was to become a celebrated and central work of Malay literature.<sup>25</sup>

Actually, Van Leeuwen did not get this information without help because he had not mastered Arabic. He had to rely on the insights of Theodoor Willem Juynboll (1866–1948), who kindly provided him with the information.<sup>26</sup> This prominent Dutch specialist in Islamic law apparently spent some time in the Berlin library in the 1930s and was prepared to investigate the manuscripts on behalf of Van Leeuwen.

Given the circumstances of the time, when I first started to investigate the *Sīra*-text from the Aya Sofya microfilm, and having no other reference except the description of similar manuscripts by Van Leeuwen, I decided to order a microfilm from Berlin of the complete Wetzstein collection numbers Wetzstein II 522–529.<sup>27</sup>

I was particularly interested in the last part of the story, manuscript Wetzstein II 529, which contained the closing section of the epic. This part of the epic was missing from all the manuscripts of the Malay text, and therefore also in the Van Leeuwen summary. Hence, the closing section of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in the Aya Sofya manuscript 3004 could not be compared to the summary of the Malay text. This gap might possibly be filled if the end part was present in the Wetzstein manuscript. When I received the manuscripts, I was confronted with another complication. The quality of the images was problematic, especially Wetzstein II 529, when read from the old-fashioned microfilm device, which lacked fine-tuning gear. It was even tougher to decipher the text from the black and white offprints made from the images of the microfilm. On many pages, the script of the verso side showed heavily through the paper on the recto side, a well-known problem for manuscript readers before the age of digitisation. It had been remarked in Ahlwardt that the script was “nicht ganz leicht zu lesen”, but reading the images seemed virtually impossible, especially for an inexperienced palaeographer.<sup>28</sup>

25 See Su Fang Ng, “Global Souvenirs: Bridging East and West in the Malay Alexander Romance”, *Literature Compass*, 11 (2014) 7, pp. 395–408.

26 T.W. Juynboll (1866–1948) was the author of a handbook on *Šāfiʿī* law. This manual was used in the education of Dutch colonial civil servants.

27 Prior, on my request, my parents had visited the Staatsbibliothek where they had been kindly informed by Dr Hars S. Kurio about the condition of the manuscripts and the microfilm services of the library.

28 Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*, vol. viii, p. 69.



FIGURE 8.2 *Sīrat a; Iskandar*  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK,  
 ORIENTABTEILUNG, WETZSTEIN II 529,  
 F. 102A

Therefore, sometime later, I also ordered Wetzstein II 531, which supposedly also contained the “Schlussband von *Sīrat al-Iskandar*”.<sup>29</sup>

When I received the microfilm of this text, it was a relief because the manuscript was quite readable.

29 According to Ahlwardt, Ms. Wetzstein II 531 (9111) dates from AH1170/1757.

7 **Arabic Popular Epics and *Sīrat al-Iskandar***

Moreover, it revealed surprises that later on would have an impact on the study of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* tradition and the genre of Arabic popular romances in general.

Following my primary investigations into the Wetzstein manuscripts and the collation of the material with the Aya Sofya, gradually pieces started to fall into place. The *Sīrat al-Iskandar* could be classified as a full-fledged *sīra*, belonging to the genre of popular epics.<sup>30</sup> After studying many other manuscript copies of the text, in the collections of Paris, London, Cambridge, Manchester, Munich, Leiden, Damascus and Cairo, it became clear that the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* was just another of the narratives bearing the title *Sīra*, such as *Sīrat 'Antar*, *Sīrat Sayf ibn Dī Yazan*, *Sīrat al-Amīra Dāt al-Himma*, *Sīrat Baybars*, and others. It also meant that Ahlwardt had adequately categorised the texts among the popular romances, which he called “Grosse Romane”, the genre that later in Arabic literary critic would be termed “*sīra ša'biyya*”.

I do not need to repeat here what I demonstrated in the chapters four and five of my book *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*. In short, the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* is similar in style, expression, development, transmission and function to the *siyar ša'biyya*, but may differ, to a certain extent, in the way it was composed. Although the narrative is definitely part of a tradition of orally performed storytelling, many elements also point to the transmission of a partly written tradition and composition.

Having presented these conclusions, I have to return to the remark about an Arabic Pseudo-Callisthenes found by Rice in Constantinople in the 1960s, which prompted the research in the first place. This text was supposedly a missing link between the Syriac and Ethiopic translations of the Greek Romance, all of them standing in a long tradition from antiquity.

The investigations resulted in the conclusion that the Aya Sofya manuscripts and the Wetzstein and other collections preserved a text, *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, which was not the sought-after *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes, but a narrative in which the protagonist is a character named al-Iskandar Dū l-Qarnayn. He was modelled after the ideal of an invincible Arabian hero, faithful

30 See Doufīkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 195–277. Doufīkar-Aerts, “The Marginal Voice of a Popular Romance: *Sīrat-Al-Iskandar wa mā fihā min al-'ajāyib wa 'l-gharāyib*”, in *Marginal Voices in Literature and Society: Individual and Society in the Mediterranean Muslim World*, ed. Robin Ostle, Strasbourg, European Science Foundation, 2000, pp. 13–24; Doufīkar-Aerts, “*Sīrat Al-Iskandar: An Arabic Popular Romance of Alexander*”, in *Studies on Arabic Epics* [= *Oriente Moderno*, Nuova Serie 22], ed. Giovanni Canova, Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente C.A. Nallino, 83 (2003), pp. 505–520.

and inspired, who explored the world and fulfilled a divine mission to convert all nations on the earth to monotheism. Throughout his travels, King al-Iskandar forms a duo with his companion, the saint al-Ḥidr.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, in the quest for the Arabic Pseudo-Callisthenes, the study of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* manuscripts turned out not to be in vain, among other things because it brought results that could not have been imagined on the basis of any of the descriptions of the *Sīra* manuscripts in the catalogues.

## 8 Arabic Translations from the Syriac Pseudo-Callisthenes

I made a first important discovery in the earlier mentioned Wetzstein manuscript, Wetzstein II 531. Since I was eager, as mentioned before, to become acquainted with the closing section of the story, which was missing from all the Malay manuscripts and the Van Leeuwen summary, I started to read the final episodes provided in this manuscript, ff. 50a–56b.

Not unexpectedly, the final part begins with al-Iskandar's future being forecasted by Balinās (Apollonius), who says that the king will die on a piece of soil of iron, under a golden sky. – This prediction of his death is a very common element in the Arabic Alexander tradition. – A little later al-Iskandar lies down on an iron armour plate to rest and some of his companions put spears in the ground on top of which they placed a golden shield to give their king shelter from the sun. This is the moment at which God sends his angel of death. Just before he dies, he replies to a letter from his mother, Urūqiya (Olympias), with her request to send her all his treasures by means of a single rider on horseback. This letter is known as the *Bettelbrief* (“begging letter”) and her demand is done in the form of a riddle.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, he writes her a letter of consolation.<sup>33</sup>

31 An extensive summary of part one of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in ms. Aya Sofya 3003 can be found in Chapter 7 of Doufīkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 279–367. On al-Ḥidr see Patrick Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2000.

32 Ms. Wetzstein II, 531, f. 50a. Alexander draws a map on a cowhide and marks all the places where he hid treasures. He has a single rider on horseback deliver the map at his mother's. See the references to this letter in Doufīkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, p. 404.

33 Ms. Wetzstein II, 531, f. 50b–51b. A motif from the Pseudo-Callisthenes Romance and wisdom literature, see Doufīkar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 120–123. The various letters of consolation occurring in Arabic texts were categorised by Spitaler as types I, II and III. The letter in Wetzstein II 531 combines features of Spitaler's categories III and I. The letter of type I includes Alexander's advice to his mother to organise a banquet, which can be attended only by guests who have not suffered the loss of someone dear to them. As a result, there is not a single guest who can accept the invitation. See Anton Spitaler,

Then al-Iskandar dies and funeral ceremonies are performed, ending with the Greek philosophers pronouncing funeral orations at his bier. These are common elements reported by Islamic historians and compilers of wisdom literature.<sup>34</sup>

In the remainder of the book, however, we amazingly enough are presented with an addition to the report of the hero's death. As we have seen in the previous scene, al-Iskandar's death had been declared: *qaḍā naḥbahu*, "he gave up the ghost", (f. 51b). However, on the next page the narrator says – *qāla al-rāwī* – that he attached a separate chapter with another version of al-Iskandar's death, which was translated from Syriac and which he had similarly found in *aḥbār* ("reports") of the Arabs.

When he arrived in Babel, it says in this chapter, he wrote a letter to his mother. When I read this, it immediately rang a bell, although I initially was quite sceptical about the claim that the episode was translated from Syriac, "*nuqila min al-Suryānī ilā 'l-'Arabī*" (f. 52a).

However, in the Syriac translation of the *Alexander Romance* the last part, referred to as "The Last Days of Alexander", starts in fact with a letter to his mother from Babel about his travels in the East. He writes about his visit to the temple of Heracles with golden and silver statues, his visit to the palace of Xerxes with a magical bird in a cage and many other details very reminiscent of the earlier recensions of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*. Moreover, in the Wetzstein manuscript we find the precise details as they occur in the Syriac Romance.

The Letter is followed by the report of al-Iskandar's assassination, plotted by a Macedonian general and carried out by his cup-bearer. His death is preceded by an evil omen: a monstrous child is born, with both human and animal body parts. During a drinking party, al-Iskandar is poisoned. Then again funeral orations are given, and his mother and wife speak at the bier. – This is an additional motif, an exceedingly elaborated one, in the Arabic tradition, but which is non-existent in the Syriac Alexander Romance. – Then again, in accordance with the Syriac text, at the end of the biography the names of the thirteen cities built by al-Iskandar are listed, and he is buried in Egypt, in the city named after him, al-Iskandariyya (Alexandria).<sup>35</sup>

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"Die Arabische Fassung des Trostbriefs Alexanders an seine Mutter" in *Studie Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* vol. 11, Rome, Istituto per l'Oriente, 1956, pp. 493–508.

34 Ms. Wetzstein II, 531, f. 51b–52a. See Doufikaar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 123–128.

35 See Aerts, *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writing*, ed. Willem J. Aerts, Cornelia Elizabeth Visser and Jos M.M. Hermans, Nijmegen, Alfa, 1978; also see Doufikaar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*,

## 9 Five *Alexander Romance* Episodes in *Sīra* Manuscripts

After scrutiny and collation of the episode of the Last Days with the Syriac Romance, it appeared that the remark of the narrator was evidently true and that the Syriac text could definitely be identified as the *Vorlage* for the Arabic translation in the added chapter of the Last Days in the *Sīra*. The final parts of Wetzstein II 531 and 529 do include the Arabic version of the Syriac Last Days. This feature, namely that the *Sīra* manuscripts give two different versions of Alexander's death, one after the other, occurs in most of the examined manuscripts, but not in the Aya Sofya manuscript and probably not in the Malay *Hikāyat* either.

However, this lucky discovery of the episode of the Last Days in the Wetzstein *Sīra*, meant that a whole section of Pseudo-Callisthenes was interpolated into a popular romance. This came to me as a complete surprise, because this narrative genre did not seem the most obvious type of text to incorporate pieces from "historical" writing.

From that moment on, I had to assume that more episodes could be tracked down. Thanks to the Wetzstein manuscript 531, I discovered that the Last Days also occurs in many other manuscript copies of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar*, but I also found various other episodes interpolated into the *Sīra* texts.

I finally traced four other episodes originating in the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes, among others the "Letter from Alexander to Aristotle", which is a very well-known text in medieval Europe, known as the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*. In the meantime, I made an edition with translation of this text.<sup>36</sup>

I am still examining manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in order to unearth similar episodes, which may occur all of a sudden in one of the copies. All the manuscripts differ to a certain extent in wording, the order of episodes and

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p. 75; Doufikaer-Aerts, "Les derniers jours d'Alexandre' dans un roman populaire arabe: un miroir du roman syriaque du Pseudo-Callisthène", in *Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales. Actes du Colloque de Paris 27-29 novembre 1997*, ed. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Claire Kappler and François Suard, Nanterre, Service Publidix, 1999, pp. 61-75; Doufikaer-Aerts, "The Last Days of Alexander in a popular Romance of Alexander", in *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis, Maaik Zimmerman and Wytse Hette Keulen, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2003, pp. 23-35.

36 Doufikaer-Aerts, "A letter in Bits and Pieces: The *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* Arabica. A First Edition with Translation Based on Four 16th-18th Century Manuscripts", in *Writings and Writing: Investigations in Islamic Text and Script in Honour of Dr. Januarius Justus Witkam, Professor of Codicology and Palaeography of the Islamic World at Leyden University*, ed. Robert Kerr and Thomas Milo, Cambridge, Archetype, 2013, pp. 91-115.

content, and each copy may have extensions, interpolations or abbreviations. The interpolations of passages translated from the Syriac Romance, however, are quite consistent, which makes it plausible that they all derive from the same archetype. The other episodes so far traced in the *Sīra* which stem directly from the Syriac Romance, are the Elevating Letter from Aristotle to Alexander, the Incognito Visit of Alexander to Darius and the episode of the Amazons.<sup>37</sup>

This explains my earlier remark that the manuscripts of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* are a treasure trove for (allegedly) lost episodes of the *Alexander Romance* in Arabic.

## 10 The Arabic Translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*

There is another development in the study of the Arabic Alexander tradition, which is also a direct after effect of the investigations into the *Sīra*. I have remarked that Zotenberg had sent excerpts of the Paris manuscripts to Nöldeke, on which the latter based his qualification of the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* manuscripts as “nur so freien Erzählungen seiner Taten”.

The descriptions of the subsequent numbers in the Paris catalogue, BNF arabe 3683–3687, are concise as well: “même ouvrage”, and “première partie du même ouvrage”. Further on: “autre roman d’Alexandre” and: “Histoire d’Alexandre dsou ’l-Qarnain, par un anonyme.” It also gives a few lines of information: “Ce roman renferme différentes lettres d’Alexandre et une lettre adressée par Darius a l’empereur Tibère.”<sup>38</sup>

This seems insignificant – even weird – information. Nevertheless, the last text, nr. 3687, appears to be of major importance. It must even be considered that *if* Zotenberg had sent samples of this particular manuscript to Nöldeke – he apparently only sent “Proben” of ms. 3682 – then the history of the reception of the Alexander tradition in Arabic would have taken a different

37 See Doufikaar-Aerts, “Dionysus, Enoch and Zakhraf: Deity, Prophet and King of the Jinn. Metamorphoses of the *Golden Letter*”, in *Medioevo Romanzo e Orientale Temi e Motivi Epico-Cavallereschi fra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Gaetano Lalomia and Antonio Pioletti, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino Editore, 2010, pp. 115–128; Doufikaar-Aerts, “Al-Iskandar en Dārīnūsh. Alexanders bezoek aan Darius in Arabische handschriften”, in *Alexander en Darius: De Macedoniër in de spiegel van het Nabije Oosten*, ed. Diederik Burgersdijk, Wouter Henkelman and Willemijn Waal, Hilversum, Verloren, 2013, pp. 183–193; Doufikaar-Aerts, “De Arabische Alexanderroman en Alexanders ontmoeting met de Amazonen”, in *De Klassieke oudheid in de Islamitische wereld* [= Lampas, 46], ed. Rolf Strootman, Hilversum, Verloren, 2013, pp. 301–316.

38 William McGuckin, le Baron de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1883–1895, pp. 628–629.

turn. It seems inevitable that Nöldeke would have recognised in this text the traces of the sought-after Arabic version of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance*. But it did not happen that way.

A century later, I fortunately examined the text of the Paris manuscript, described as an anonymous history of Alexander Dū l-Qarnayn. It demonstrated that the Arabic translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Alexander Romance* had survived after all. This manuscript clearly contained the Arabic *Alexander Romance*, the longed-for intermediary; I called it the Quzmān tradition, after the copyist's name in the Paris manuscript.<sup>39</sup>

In the years after this discovery I found three other manuscripts containing this text, on the basis of which I am currently preparing a critical edition with an English translation.<sup>40</sup> One of these manuscripts I traced again in the Berlin collection; it was not catalogued among the *Grosse Romane* with the Wetzstein manuscripts because it was purchased by the library only in 1896. However, it was described a century later in the catalogue by Schoeler; the manuscript had not been noticed by Nöldeke either, naturally because his publication preceded the manuscript's acquisition by the Berlin library.<sup>41</sup>

The discovery of this missing-link version of the Romance in the Quzmān manuscript and in the other copies brought about a major insight into the transmission of the *Alexander Romance* as a whole. At long last the scattered episodes interpolated in the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* could be compared with the same passages in the representatives of the Quzmān tradition. However, it generated the conclusion that the versions in both texts were different, although they were based on the same archetype, the Syriac Romance. The *Sīra* interpolations are quite close to the Syriac text, which excludes the possibility that they are derived from a Greek or other recension of Pseudo-Callisthenes. The Quzmān text is, for the greater part, also based on the Syriac tradition, but the text seems to be more a paraphrased than a literal translation. Both versions apparently go back to the same source, rooted in the Syriac Romance, but they could not possibly derive from one another.

39 See Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, §1.6.4, pp. 58–73.

40 I thank Adil Sidarus, Prof. emeritus of Évora University, Portugal, for kindly bringing one of the manuscripts to my attention.

41 Gregor Schoeler, *Arabische Handschriften, Reihe B: Teil 2* [= Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, vol. xvii], Stuttgart, Steiner, 1990, p. 316. Dr Feistel kindly provided me with the information that the ms. was purchased from the antique book store of G. Hess, Munich, in 1896. See Doufikar-Aerts, "Coptic Miniature Painting in the Arabic Alexander Romance", in *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages, Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. Markus Stock, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2016, pp. 151–176.

A logical explanation for this phenomenon was my hypothesis that two independent translations were made, both in the ninth century. They are either based on the same source, a *Vorlage* close to the Syriac *Alexander Romance* as it has come down to us, in the Wallis Budge edition, or they derive from two different versions of the source in Syriac. It cannot be ruled out that a second, parallel Syriac version of the Romance may have existed, which did not survive.

The theories are now subject to renewed research in our ongoing project, *Beyond the European Myth. In Search of the Afro-Asiatic Alexander Cycle and the Transnational Migration of Ideas and Concepts of Culture and Identity* at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Coming back to the Aya Sofya manuscripts as the starting point of the investigations, the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* has proven to be a popular romance worthy of scholarly attention within the field of the Arabic popular narrative tradition, and in its own right. The contents of manuscript AS 3003 have been surveyed in a comprehensive summary in Chapter 7 of *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, and an edition is in preparation.<sup>42</sup>

A final observation may conclude this “chronicle” of scholarly proceedings: in 1978, a volume was published entitled *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Ten Studies on the Last Days of Alexander in Literary and Historical Writing*. In the introduction (p. viii), it said: “Contributions from other disciplines, such as Italian, Slavonic languages and Arabic were badly needed, but no representatives of them could be found.”<sup>43</sup>

The writer of these words in the introduction was my father, Willem J. Aerts (†2017), and as far as it concerned the ambition to include the Arabic Last Days the desideratum could hardly have been fulfilled at the time, because the episode was not known to have survived. *Kismet* decided that my investigations into the Wetzstein collection, some twenty years later, would reveal the existence of the Arabic Last Days after all.

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42 Doufika-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, pp. 283–367.

43 See above, note 35.

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## Wetzstein in Wonderland

### *Arabian Epic Manuscripts in the Wetzstein Collections*

*Claudia Ott*

A substantial number of Wetzstein's manuscripts belong to the genre of Arabian Popular Epic (in Arabic: *sīra* or *sīra ša'biyya*). The list of manuscripts in Wetzstein's second Berlin collection clearly demonstrates this: 17 of the 18 titles given by Wilhelm Ahlwardt in his catalogue under the headline "Große Romane" are found in the "Wetzstein 11" collection that had been incorporated into the stock of the Berlin Royal Library (today Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) in 1862.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Rifā'iyya Library, acquired by Wetzstein at Damascus in 1853, its focus on secular and fictitious literature has been highlighted in the catalogue "Refaiya 1853" by the University Library of Leipzig where it is preserved until the present day.<sup>2</sup> A much smaller collection of Wetzstein's acquisitions is kept at Tübingen University Library,<sup>3</sup> one of the most interesting of these manuscripts, that touches the *sīra* genre, will be dealt with at the end of this article.

Arabian Epics are heroic tales of enormous length, the longest of them consisting of up to 81 printed volumes and almost 12,000 pages in manuscript form, the average length being about 3,000 manuscript pages, with none covering less than 500 pages.<sup>4</sup> The total number of texts belonging to the genre is not entirely clear. Up to now, we know of approximately ten major epics and twenty minor ones, regarding their extent and their degree of popularity. Each epic is centered around the life and deeds of a specific hero, often a historical character, (e.g. the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim in the *Sīrat al-Ḥākim*), his ancestors and off-

1 See Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der arabischen Handschriften*. Achter Band, Berlin, A. Asher & Co., 1896 [= *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, vol. 20].

2 See *Refaiya 1853: Buchkultur in Damaskus*, ed. Verena Klemm, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 2013, p. 42.

3 See the article of Michaela Hofmann-Ruf in the present volume.

4 For this and the following paragraphs see Claudia Ott, "Cross-Border Warriors in the Arabian Folk Epic", in *The Tradition of Romances in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond (8th–15th centuries)*, ed. Carolina Cupane and Bettina Krönung, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2017, pp. 285–310.

spring, or a group of heroes (e.g. the *muġāhidūn* “Holy Warriors” in the *Epic of the Holy Warriors*). Female heroes and warrior women appear significantly often.<sup>5</sup> The heroes are usually affiliated with a specific Arabic tribe (e.g. the Banū Hilāl in the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl*), which in a tribal context allows the epic to create tribal identification. In a broader social context, the self-identification is usually to Islam, while the “other” are its enemies, very often Christians, e.g. Byzantines and Franks.

While some epics are set in pre-Islamic times – e.g. the *Sīrat Fīrūz Šāh* in Achaemenid Persia, the *Sīrat al-Iskandar* in Alexander’s era, the *Sīrat ‘Antara* in Pre-Islamic North Arabia and the *Sīrat Sayf Ibn Dī Yazan* in Pre-Islamic South Arabia – the majority are set after the introduction of Islam, especially during the Islamic conquests, the Crusades (e.g. *Sīrat Baybars*) and the conflicts between Islamic warriors and their enemies (e.g. *Epic of the Holy Warriors*). Taken together, the Arabian epics cover almost all of recorded pre-Islamic and Islamic history from the remotest past until the Fatimid (*Sīrat al-Ḥākim*) and Mamluk era (*Sīrat Baybars*). Shared protagonists and cross references link the epics to one another and help to generate a coherent chain of epics.

The epics usually are entitled *sīra* (pl. *siyar*) “geste, vita, way of life, biography” (as e.g. *Sīrat al-Iskandar* “*Epic of Alexander*”, *Sīrat al-Muġāhidīn* “*Epic of the Holy Warriors*”), but some simply call themselves “story” (*qiṣṣa*), while others use the older term *dīwān*. The modern Arabic term for “Folk Epic”, *sīra ša’biyya*, is a borrowing from the European terminus for “popular romance” or “popular epic”. It combines the generic term *sīra* with the adjective “popular” (*ša’bī*). The latter attribution, borrowed from modern western folklore scholarship, aims to indicate the circumstances of the composition, transmission and reception of the works in question and to distinguish the pseudohistorical epic “biographies” from the canonized ones like the famous biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (*Sīrat al-Nabī* or *al-Sīra al-Nabawīyya*) by Ibn Ishāq (d. 767).<sup>6</sup>

The oldest reliable testimonies of Arabian epics date from the twelfth century, although the genre probably began to develop much earlier.<sup>7</sup> Most ref-

5 See Remke Kruk, *The Warrior Women of Islam: Female Empowerment in Arabic Popular Literature*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2014.

6 See Claudia Ott, *Metamorphosen des Epos: Sīrat al-Muġāhidīn (Sīrat al-Amīra Dāt al-Himma) zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*, Leiden, Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 2003, pp. 6–8.

7 See Ott, *Metamorphosen*, pp. 45–50; Peter Heath, *The Thirsty Sword: Sīrat ‘Antar and the Arabic Popular Epic*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1996, pp. 27–30.

erences from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries depreciate the epics as works without any literary value and advise not to read them.

Arabian epics are of pseudohistorical character. They claim to be what Hans Robert Jauss calls “epic truth”,<sup>8</sup> i.e. they intend to be believed as true history. From the point of view of “canonical” Arabic historiography, this led to a negative estimation. Arabian epics were condemned as being full of lies, disguising the truth and telling “nonsense that only fools can believe”.<sup>9</sup> Obviously, they were expected to tell such stories that could be judged by the criteria of true and false, and not, for example, by criteria of art or fictitious literature, like e.g. the stories told by Sheherazade in the *Arabian Nights*.

But the epics do not relate history in a literal sense. They always tell a good story. Numerous exciting and entertaining episodes illustrate the vivid martial, social, amicable and erotic relations between protagonists of all sides involved, be it Muslims and Christians, Arabs and Byzantines, Franks and Persians or other parties. Dangerous encounters with enemies of supernatural power occur, and even the world of magic has its place in mysterious treasure caves or wonderful journeys through lands like the “Land of Wonders”, the “Wadi of the Gardens”, the “Land of Thunder”, the “Carbuncle Islands” and so on. Despite significant differences in style, content and historical origin among works of the genre, all epics share what Peter Heath called an “emphasis on heroes and heroic deeds of battle, their pseudo-historical tone and setting, and their indefatigable drive toward cyclic expansion: one event leads to another, one battle to another, one war to another, and so on for hundreds and thousands of pages.”<sup>10</sup>

Arabian epics were composed and transmitted anonymously. Nevertheless, in the introductory part of some epics, a chain of “storytellers” (*rāwī*) is mentioned who related and transmitted a particular epic or even hold good for its author (*muʿallif*, *muṣannif*). The latter is the case with the *rāwī* Nağd Ibn Hišām al-ʿĀmirī, descendant of the Banū Kilāb tribe, who serves as a kind of “super-authority” for the *Epic of the Holy Warriors*, the tribal epic of the Banū Kilāb. Other epics were ascribed to serious historians in order to enhance their plausibility as “true history”. Thus, the well-respected Egyptian historian Ibn Ḥallikān (d. AH 681/1282) figures as author of *Sīrat al-Ḥākim*, notwithstanding the numerous magical and supernatural elements in this epic. A third example

8 See Hans Robert Jauss, “Epos und Roman: Eine vergleichende Betrachtung an Texten des XII. Jahrhunderts”, *Nachrichten der Gießener Hochschulgesellschaft*, 31 (1962), pp. 76–92, here p. 80.

9 Thus the judgment of Ibn Kaṭīr (d. AH 774/1373), see Ott, *Metamorphosen*, p. 47.

10 Heath, *The Thirsty Sword*, p. xvi.

is the philologist and poet al-Aṣmaʿī (d. AH 213/828), the alleged author of *Sīrat ʿAntara*, in which epic poets and poetry play a particularly prominent role.<sup>11</sup> In each of these and other cases, the genuine authorship of the alleged *rāwīs* can obviously be excluded.

The *rāwī* has also the function of a “virtual storyteller”. Using different types of textual insertions – like “The *rāwī* said” (*qāla l-rāwī*), “Oh you gentlemen, oh you noble men” (*yā sādā yā kirām*), “Pray for the perfect full-moon” (*ṣallū ʿalā badr al-tamām*), “Let us now come back to the first story” (*wa-narǧīʿ ilā l-ḥadīṯ al-awwal*), “It has become night, the story will go on tomorrow night” (*wa-l-layl amsā wa-tamām al-ḥadīṯ laylat ḡadā*) – he creates a complete oral storytelling performance within the written text and thus transforms the readers into a storyteller’s audience.<sup>12</sup>

Arabian epics appear in oral as well as in written media. There is one epic, the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl*, which in the early twenty-first century is still being performed in its orally generated form by epic singers accompanying themselves with the one-stringed *rabāb* and reciting the verses of the epic in the typical epic style between improvisation and memorized formulae.<sup>13</sup> But the predominant style of oral performance of the Arabian epics was and is the public reading of the written text, of which nineteenth-century European travellers have left incidental accounts.<sup>14</sup> Until relatively recently, this kind of performance was a common part of daily life in Arabic speaking countries. Nevertheless, few such performances have been subjected to a detailed analysis.<sup>15</sup>

In their written form, Arabian epics were transmitted in manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> The oldest dated manuscripts of Arabian epics are from around 1400 AD. Among them are fragments of the *Sīrat al-Ḥākīm*, the *Sīrat ʿAntara* and the *Sīrat al-*

11 See Ott, *Metamorphosen*, pp. 42–45.

12 See Claudia Ott, “From the Coffeehouse into the Manuscript: The Storyteller and His Audience in the Manuscripts of an Arabian Epic”, *Oriente Moderno*, n.s. 22[83] (2003) 2, pp. 443–451.

13 See Dwight Fletcher Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition*, Ithaca, NY and London, Cornell University Press, 1985.

14 See Heath, *The Thirsty Sword*, pp. 31–42; Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006, pp. 14–19.

15 Among them is the reading of a “storyteller” (*ḥakawātī*) in a Damascus coffeehouse, recorded in 1994 by Thomas Herzog, *Présentation de deux séances de ḥakawātī et de deux manuscrits de la Sīrat Baybars recueillis en Syrie en 1994*, Aix-en-Provence, Université de Provence, 1994 (unpublished M.A. Thesis); and of Sī Milūd bin ʿAbd al-Nabī Laʿšīš, recorded in 1997 by Remke Kruk and Claudia Ott, “In the Popular Manner: Sīra-recitation in Marakesh anno 1997”, *Edebiyat*, n.s. 10 (1999), pp. 183–198.

16 For the following see Ott, *Metamorphosen*, p. 51 sqq.

*Muğāhidīn*, i.e. the *Epic of the Holy Warriors*. The majority of the preserved manuscripts originate from the sixteenth- to eighteenth centuries. It was not before the late nineteenth century that some of the epics appeared in print. Thousands of manuscript volumes of Arabian epics have been preserved. Interestingly, they are not the product of generative orality, i.e. a creative re-writing or re-telling of the story, but on the contrary show all features of scriptural transmission like scribal errors, omissions of lines or words and interlinear glosses.<sup>17</sup> The transmission of the epics, thus, is much more literal than might be assumed.

Most of the manuscripts preserved until today are of heterogeneous appearance, have a long history of compilation, and were put together many years, if not centuries after the copying of their oldest core. In such manuscripts, fragments of up to fifty different copies may be found. In contrast to this kind of manuscript, there are also some finer and homogeneous manuscripts. The number of volumes in these copies is smaller, and they were apparently copied for the use of private libraries and their owners.<sup>18</sup>

The most common form of the manuscripts were slim booklets written for the use of storytellers who recited them in public performance. These volumes were frequently lent out, and clever librarians, sometimes storytellers themselves, could make good money with them. This is illustrated by a long reader's remark at the end of one of the Manuscripts of the *Epic of the Holy Warriors*, commenting on the division of the manuscript into parts:

Oh possessor of this book! May God not have mercy upon you! What shame you are among the storytellers [...] because you end your book on the most unlikely and meanest passage, and this only in order to trick your customers, so that you can take as much money from them as you would like! If it were not like that, this passage would not be fit to end the text here or to interrupt it!<sup>19</sup>

One of the "possessors" of such books mentioned in this comment was Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Ḥalabī, many of whose books were acquired by Wetzstein. Al-Qayyim al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ al-Šaqīfātī al-Ḥalabī lived in the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century in Syria. In his impressive library he kept books of many literary genres, a majority of

17 See the detailed analyses *ibid.*, pp. 101–137.

18 See Ott, *Metamorphosen*, pp. 51–100 and the catalogue in the same book, pp. 218–256.

19 A Photograph of the page is published in Ott, *Metamorphosen*, Abb. XLVII. See also Ott, "From the Coffeehouse into the Manuscript", p. 451.

them belonging to popular secular literature, in particular epics. Boris Liebrecht describes it as “a private, but apparently publicly accessible manuscript collection” and continues: “[it] surely catered to the need of those with an appetite for *sīras*, but his library attracted an audience not only from every social strata but also interested in a wide array of literary genres apart from those taught in the traditional religious curriculum.”<sup>20</sup>

Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ’s books were lent out frequently. In the Berlin manuscript of *Sīrat al-Ḥākim*,<sup>21</sup> e.g., 46 readers’ notes from the years AH 1191/1777 to AH 1264/1848 are preserved. Since the last pages of each volume have been removed, that manuscript probably had contained many more readers’ notes. Many readers have left not only their name, but also short poems, greetings or other notes. On the last page of part 5, we find a short message of greeting to the owner of the Book: *al-salām ‘alā aḥūnā al-Ḥāǧǧ Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ* “A greeting to our brother, Ḥāǧǧ Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ” (see fig. 9.1).

The contents of *Sīrat al-Ḥākim* cover the history of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amrillāh (985–1021) beginning with his ancestors – a dynasty of former kings of Qayrawān – then relating al-Ḥākim’s long path to caliphal power, his adventures as caliph, his mysterious disappearance, the foundation of the city of Cairo by a girl, later “queen”, named al-Qāhira, daughter of Fatima and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz – the later caliph al-Malik al-Mu‘izz – and the history of the sons and successors of al-Ḥākim, mainly his son al-Zāhir, up to the death of all protagonists. While the first half of the epic is set in North Africa, India and Yemen, the second half is almost entirely connected with “Franks and Byzantines”, figures with mixed points of reference to both the Crusaders and the Byzantines. In large parts of the epic, female protagonists are the main actors. In particular, the wives, mothers and daughters of all male protagonists play major roles in the epic. One might even call *Sīrat al-Ḥākim* the “female face of Egypt’s fantastic history”.<sup>22</sup>

20 See Boris Liebrecht, “The Library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ: Books and their Audience in 12th to 13th/18th to 19th Century Syria”, in *Marginal Perspectives on Early Modern Ottoman Culture*, ed. Ralf Elger and Ute Pietruschka, Halle, Martin-Luther-Universität, 2013, pp. 17–59, here p. 48.

21 Wetzstein II 486–505 in 20 volumes.

22 See Claudia Ott, “Finally we know ... why, how, and where caliph al-Ḥākim disappeared! *Sīrat al-Ḥākim bi-Amrillāh* and its Berlin Manuscript”, in *Fictionalizing the Past: Historical Characters in Arabic Popular Epic. Workshop held at the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, 28th/29th of November 2007 in Honor of Remke Kruk [= Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 206]*, ed. Sabine Dorpmüller, Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA, Peeters, 2011, pp. 63–72 and ead., “Wo versteckt sich al-Ḥākim? Eine Spurensuche in der *Sīrat al-Hakim bi-Amrillah* und ihrer Berliner Handschrift.” in *Differenz und Dynamik im Islam: Festschrift*



FIGURE 9.1 A greeting to the owner Aḥmad al-Rabbāt al-Ḥalabī  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, WETZSTEIN II  
490, F. 41B

The Berlin manuscript of *Sīrat al-Ḥākim* was purchased between 1852 and 1857 in Damascus. In 1858, the manuscript reached the “Königliche Bibliothek zu Berlin” as a part of Wetzstein’s second and most extensive collection. In view of the complex history of composition of this heterogeneous manuscript, it seems probable that it remained in the possession of the family of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt al-Ḥalabī, probably in particular his son Muḥammad Ibn al-Rabbāt, who continued to lend the book to readers.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in the manuscript of *Sīrat al-Ḥākim* we find several readers notes by the Damascene Amīn Zaytūna (AH1237/1821-after AH1293/1876),<sup>24</sup> later a bookseller among other things, who also left his notes in the famous manuscript of *Sīrat ‘Umar al-Nu‘mān*,

*für Heinz Halm zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Verena Klemm, Würzburg, Ergon, 2012, pp. 399–410; Antje Lenora, *Der gefälschte Kalif: Eine Einführung in die Sīrat al-Ḥākim bi-Amrillāh*, Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2011 (<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:4-9640>).

23 See Ott, *Finally*, pp. 66–69.

24 On his and his family’s frequent visits to Aḥmad al-Rabbāt see Liebrecht, *Library*, pp. 42–43.



FIGURE 9.2 *Ḥikāyat 'Umar al-Nu'mān wa-waladayhi Šarkān wa-Dau' al-Makān*, c. 1640. This is the so called "Tübingen Umar", acquired by Wetzstein in Damascus c. 1860  
 UB DER UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, MA VI 32, F. 408A

which had been lent out a few years earlier by a reader who declares to have lent it from Muḥammad Ibn al-Rabbāṭ.<sup>25</sup>

When Johann Gottfried Wetzstein managed to purchase the “Tübingen Umar” between 1860 and 1862 in Damascus, he killed two birds with one stone. This splendid manuscript belongs to both literary genres – the Epic and the Arabian Nights. The Tübingen Manuscript contains the complete *sīrat ‘Umar al-Nu‘mān*, a complex royal family drama. It tells the story of a king named *‘Umar al-Nu‘mān* and his two rivalling sons who unintentionally get involved into political conflicts between Christians and Muslims and take part in an expedition against Constantinople. After the death of the protagonists, the story focuses on the activities of the next generation of the family. The family members join forces, remobilize the army, defeat the Byzantine emperor and succeed in restoring order and harmony to the kingdom. As a family saga, the *Sīrat ‘Umar* shows resemblances to the *sīra* genre, and so it even bears the generic term *sīra* in its title. But more than that: it is in fact a close relative of one of the huge Arabic popular epics, namely the *Sīrat al-Muḡāhidīn* or *Sīrat al-Amīra Dāt al-Himma*, which deals with the adventures of Umayyad heroes at the frontier to Byzantium and reflects the historical expeditions of the Umayyads against Constantinople. The *Sīrat al-Muḡāhidīn* begins with the rivalry between the tribes of Banū Kilāb and Banū Sulaym. Later in the epic, the chiefs of the two tribes together lead the Islamic troops into Byzantine territory and defeat the Byzantine emperor. After the death of the first generation of heroes, their descendants come into focus. The epic ends with the death of the second and third generation of the families of the leading protagonists. Of this huge epic, more exactly, of its first four out of 70 parts, the *Sīrat ‘Umar* is the direct descendant, having been intentionally transformed to establish a part of the *Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>26</sup> But this is another story and will be told at a different time.

Let us end with a different question: How can we explain Wetzstein’s extensive excursions into the wonderland of popular epic literature? Was it Wetzstein’s special interest that let him choose this kind of manuscripts? Did Wetzstein plan to build up a complete collection of epic literature? Did he by pure coincidence purchase such collections that already had had this focus – as is

25 MS Tübingen, M.a. v1 32, fol. 286a; see Christian Seybold, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften der Königlichen Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen (Nr. 1–46)*, Tübingen, s.n., 1907, p. 76, see also Liebrecht, *Library*, loc. cit.

26 See Ott, *Metamorphosen*, pp. 112–121; ead., “Cross-Border Warriors”, pp. 303–308 and ead., “Der Tübinger Umar”, in *Handschriften des Mittelalters: Die großen Bibliotheken in Baden-Württemberg und ihre Schätze*, Stuttgart, Staatsanzeiger Verlag, 2007, pp. 76–77.

the case with the collection of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt? Or are there yet other possible reasons arising from prevailing circumstances?

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, libraries, scholars and even governors and rulers all over Europe sought to acquire complete copies of the 1001 Nights, more precisely a continuation of the famous Galland manuscript, which broke off after Night 282. But an immediate continuation was never found, and other old Arabian Nights manuscripts were quickly sold out. Therefore, in order to bring anything home to their employers, the scholars either ordered new complete manuscripts on the market – and this was how the late Egyptian recension “ZER”<sup>27</sup> was established, offering the complete text of the 1001 Nights in four huge volumes, all of them written between 1800 and 1825 – or they switched to other texts of the narrative genre and bought what they called “relatives of the Arabian Nights”<sup>28</sup> – mostly texts of the genre *šira ša’biyya*, the Arabian Epic. It could well be that Wetzstein’s many acquisitions in the field of the Arabian Epic are also a consequence of the almost magical fascination of the *Thousand and One Nights*.

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27 ZER is the abbreviation for “Zotenberg’s Egyptian Recension” first reconstructed by the French scholar Hermann Zotenberg in an article of 1887. Cf. Ulrich Marzolph et al. (eds.): *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara; Denver; Oxford 2004, vol. 11, p. 740 (s.v. Zotenberg, Hermann).

28 See the report of Seetzen from Cairo in 1807: Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, *Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Ägypten*, vol. 3, ed. Friedrich Kruse, Berlin, Reimer, 1855, p. 165, quoted in Claudia Ott, “Welche Gärten uns umfassen ... Three Poems by Friedrich Rückert: Translated from a Gotha Manuscript of the *Sīrat al-Mujāhidīn (al-Amīra Dhāt al-Himma)*”, in *O ye Gentlemen: Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in Honour of Remke Kruk*, ed. Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan P. Hogendijk, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2007, pp. 333–338, here p. 334.

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## Arabic Manuscripts and Books from the Bequest of Wetzstein

*Boris Liebrecht and Christoph Rauch*

Beyond the manuscript collections Wetzstein I and II some more manuscripts and Arabic prints were incorporated into the Berlin library after his death. The estate of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein was sold from his heirs to the Royal Library in Berlin between the years 1906 and 1919 (Nachlass Wetzstein I). However, a substantial portion of these documents seems to be lost since the removal of large parts of the library's holdings during the end of WW2. A second part of Wetzstein's bequest was given to the library by his grandchild Hedda Wetzstein (d. 1990) in the year 1980 (Nachlass Wetzstein II). Both parts of the bequest (Nachlass Wetzstein I and II) contain substantial parts of his diaries, correspondence and documents. The catalogue of the existing material in Berlin was published by Ingeborg Huhn in 2006.<sup>1</sup> Nachlass Wetzstein II also contains books from his personal library, amongst other some works from Alexander von Humboldt. One of the books has a warm dedication of Humboldt on the title page.<sup>2</sup>

Together with parts of his bequest the library was offered in 1907 a set of 22 Arabic manuscripts and 15 printed works whereof the library accepted 14 manuscripts and 7 prints for a price of 250 Mark. These 14 manuscripts have not been recognized as a collection so far. Ewald Wagner included four in his catalogue of Arabic manuscripts from 1976,<sup>3</sup> but mentioned the provenance in one case only. As the majority is still uncatalogued it is our intention to provide a brief summary of the manuscripts that Wetzstein kept in his private library until the end of his life. We were not able to find out the whereabouts of the

1 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein in der Handschriftenabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006.

2 "Alexander von Humboldt, der wieder genesene Urmensch, aus den Wäldern des Orinoco und den öden Steppen Asiens, der innigste, anhänglichste Freund des Dr. Wetzsteins, des gelehrten Sammlers und sinnigen Bearbeiters des Antars aus dem Stamme Abs, Asmai's anmuthigen romantischen Novellen", dedication on the title page of Alexander von Humboldt, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 1, Stuttgart und Tübingen, Cotta, 1853.

3 Ewald Wagner, *Arabische Handschriften. Teil 1* [= Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, vol. 17B,1], Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1976.

other eight manuscripts. It is, however, not unlikely that the remaining eight manuscripts were finally also kept in his estate and can at least partly be identical with manuscript fragments in “Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 14”.

The majority of the manuscripts were unbound fragments, only three of them entered the library already in bound shape. Some are notes of poetry and of popular culture. Others contain epic tales of the Arabs. Outstanding among those fragments is the small Quranic study collection of Wetzstein, comprising early Quranic fragments from the 2nd and 3rd Islamic centuries. Among them is a page of the important Quran of Amāğūr.

## 1 Description of the Manuscripts

1) Ms. or. oct. 1119

**Mkrtič (Mekerdīğ) al-Kasīh b. ‘Abdallāh al-Muḥalla’ (fl. 1690): Rayḥānat al-arwāḥ wa-sullam al-adab wa-l-ṣalāh<sup>4</sup>**

**1b:**

هذا المجموع اللطيف المسمى بريحانة الارواح وسلم الادب والصلاح تصنيف القس مكرديج  
الكسيح الماروني

Dark brown leather binding, blind tooled, middle ornament trapezoid, edges tooled; yellowish, sturdy, European paper, 65 f., 19,5 × 12,5 cm, 15,5 × 9 cm, 19 lines, catch words, Nashī with many marginal notes and corrections by Wetzstein. This fragmentary copy of the eighteenth/nineteenth ct. was probably restored or rebound for the priest (al-ḥūrī) Yūḥannā al-Naḥḥās, resident of Beirut. The last original page after f. 63 seems missing, the hand changes.

on the flyleaf: “Geschenk des Hr. Generalconsuls Theodor Weber, welcher diese Handschrift in Beirut gekauft hat. Berlin, d. 8. Sptbr. 1876. J.G. Wetzstein.”

f. 1a, destroyed ownership statement of Ḥoğa Manşūr Ğāmātī:

4 GCAL IV, pp. 83–86; Maroun Aouad and Hamidé Fadlallah, “Philosophes chrétiens de langue arabe aux xvii<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles en Syrie et au Liban”, *Parole de l’Orient*, 34 (2009), pp. 443–468, here pp. 446–447.

[دخل بملك الخواجه منصور جاماتي من ماله الى حاله]

f. 2a, two effaced ownership statements by Anṭūn walad Ilyās Ġālī al-Ḥalabī and the priest (al-qiss) Yūḥannā Naḥḥās:

[دخل بملك انطون ولد الياس غالي الحلبي]

[دخل بملك القس يوحنا نحاس]

Incipit f. 1b:

بسم الاب والابن والروح القدس الاله الواحد امين  
الحمد لله الذي جمع في كلمته الازليه جوامع الكلم وبدائع الحكم والامثال المتعلق به كل شي  
وهو غير متعلق بشي

The text breaks off on f. 63b فاذا انت لم تملك وشيك فراقها \* فعف ولا تملك عوانا ولا بكرا

A catchword shows that the following missing page would have started with اذا.

A new subscription on f. 64a speaks of the “rescue” of this manuscript from “plunder”:

هذا الكتاب قد استخلص من النهب يرسم الخوري يوحنا النحاس قاطن يومئذ مجروسة بيروت  
فترغب ممن يصل ليده هذا الكتاب ان يسلمه لحضرة ولدنا صاحبه المشار اليه المقيم بانطوش  
كنيسة المواردنة ولا نسمح لاحد ان يطمع به ويمتلكه من دون ارادة ربه المرقوم صح

(cat. Wagner 529)

2) Ms. or. oct. 1120

**Collection of poems**, mostly single folios, filed by Wetzstein with a cardboard cover and the inscription: “Arabische Gedicht-Sammlung (Bruchstück) – verschiedene Hände”

Brown, Oriental leather binding, blind tooled, with flap; reused and bound in Berlin; 29 ff., ca. 14 × 9 cm, unvoc. Nashī.

f. 1a, several reading statements by Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Kabūṭī (dated 1204) and ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad al-Sadawī / al-Mabdawī (?):

نظر فيه عبد الفقير لي ربه قدير على سنة 1204

يد ذيل حسن ابن محمد الكبوتي

نظر فيه وتامل معانيه

عبد القادر بن الحاج محمد

السدوي / المبدوي غفر الله له ولوالده...

اللهم يا رب كل شي

يسر الى عبدك الفقير

حسن الخاتمة

(cat. Wagner 423)

3) Ms. or. oct. 1129

**Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd al-Salām b. ‘Abd al-Ḥafīz al-Quraṣī al-Makkī al-Abṭaḥī: Kitāb Mulḥat al-i‘rāb fī ‘ilm al-‘arabiyya**

half binding (added in the library), 221. ff., ca. 23×16 cm, 17,5×11 cm, 19–21 lines, Nashī, different hands on different paper last part copied 15 Ġumādā 1 1171/25 January 1758 by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. [... -ā-n]

Incipit f. 1a (directly after title, no basmala):

أعوذ فعل مضارع وفاعله مستتر وجوابه تقديراً متعلق بمحذوف مرفوع بالابتداء الباء حرف  
زايد مجرور وجار وعلامة جره بالكسرة

Explicit f. 221b:

قال مولفه الفقير الى لطف الله وعفوه محمد بن عبد الملك بن عبد السلام بن عبد الحفيظ  
بن دعسين القرشي تجاوز الله عن سيئاته ويسر له سبل مرضاته ابتداء في تسويده يوم

الخميس الثامن والعشرين من شهر ذي القعدة الحرام سنة ستة وتسعين وتسعمائة وأتممه  
 بحمد الله تعالى وعونه وبمنه اول ضحى يوم الثلث الثامن من شهر [الصفرة] صفر الخير سنة  
 تسع وتسعين وتسعمائة ثم شرعت بعد ذلك في تبييضه فاتمه عصر يوم الخميس الثامن  
 والعشرين من شهر ربيع الثاني من السنة المذكورة فالحمد لله رب العالمين على ذلك وصلى  
 الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى اله وصحبه وسلم تسليما كثيرا دائما ابدا سرمدنا الى يوم الدين  
 امين

Colophon f. 221b:

تمت وبانخير عمت وكان الفراغ من ناسخته محمد بن احمد بن [...] ظهر يوم الاثنين في 15  
 جماد الاول سنة 1171 من هجرة المصطفى صلى الله عليه وسلم

on f. 221b: "Diese von dem kaiserl. Consul Hrn Hunhold in Zanġibār erworbene  
 Handschrift wurde mir von dem Genannten im November 1889 geschenkt.  
 Wetzstein"

a work on *irāb* written in the years 11/996–2/999, not mentioned in GAL

4) Ms. or. oct. 1476

**Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥaġar al-Haytamī: Mawlid al-Nabī**

f. 1b:

هذا مولد النبي المكرم عليه من الله افضل الصلاة واتم السلام تاليف الامام الجليل الشيخ ابن  
 حجر

Bound in cardboard pasted together from different, partly very old manuscript  
 pages, supplemented with a half binding in the library; thick European paper,  
 starting from 33a five folios of thin paper with notes by Wetzstein; 38 ff., ca.  
 10,5×7,5 cm, 7 lines, unvoc. Naṣḥī with many marginal notes and corrections of  
 Wetzstein, copied Rabīʿ 11 1200 / February 1786 by Ḥiḍrī b. Saʿīd al-Qādirī (f. 32b).  
 ff. 33–38: fragments and prayers

Incipit f. 2a:

الحمد لله الذي شرف هذا العالم بمولد سيد ولد ادم وكل به سعود الانبياء والمرسلين وجميع  
الملائكة لا سيما الكروبيين والمقربين وجمع فيه ساير الكمالات

Colophon f. 32b:

والحمد لله رب العا  
لمين اللهم اغفر لكتابه و  
لمؤلفه ولسامعه وللمسلمين  
وكا الفراغ من نسخ هذا  
المولد الشريف على يد الشيخ  
خضري ابن المرحوم الشيخ سعيد  
القادري في شهر ربيع الثاني سنة 1200  
8  
نهار الاحد

According to GAL S2 p. 528 this is an excerpt from the Muḥtaṣar Qiṣṣat al-mawlid al-šarīf by the same author.

5) Ms. or. oct. 1479

**al-Kitāb al-awwal min Sirat Banī Hilāl wa-mā waqa'a lahum min al-ahwāl**

Incipit (after basmala) p. 1:

ولا عدوان الا على الظالمين ولا حول ولا قوت الا بالله العلي العظيم (...) قال الراوي  
لهذا الكلام العجيب نحن نسوقه على الترتيب حتى يلتذ ويطيب بعد الصلاة على محمد الحبيب  
وهي سيرة بني هلال وما وقع لهم من الاهوال

Explicit p. 85:

الا يا حارس البستان صونه وان فرطت طار الطير طارا  
والف صلاة على النبي محمد  
ومن صلا بحق من حر ناراً

cardboard, encased by a half binding in the library, 88 pp., 22×15,5 cm, 18,5×12 cm, 15–20 lines, copied by (*min ḥaṭṭ*) Rašīd al-Ḥallāq<sup>5</sup>

This copy has been edited by Wetzstein and contains many corrections and annotations of his hand.

On the cover: *Awwal min al-zīr min kutub al-šayḥ ‘Abdallāh al-Baḡdādī*<sup>6</sup>

(cat. Wagner 460)

6) Ms. or. oct. 1504

**Popular story (al-Qāḍī wa-l-sāriq)**

Incipit (after basmala) f. 1a:

ذكر والله اعلم (بعفنيه) واحكم واعز واکرم وافضل وارحم ذكر انه كان في قديم الزمان على  
زمان خلافة هارون الرشيد قاضي من بعض القضاة اراد ذات ليلة قلقا شديدا فقال في نفسه  
اركب بغلي واسير الى بستان

Explicit f. 18b:

قالت له هذه جرت في حرمك وافهمت القضية فعفا عنه واعطاه جاريته وزوجه مروخان  
وجعله من ندماه واحضر الحاج عاقبه حلف ما له خبر انها مزوجة واقاموا على ذلك الحال  
ونستغفر الله العظيم تم

5 On him Boris Liebreuz, *Die Rifā‘ya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, p. 330.

6 On him Boris Liebreuz, “The Library of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt, Books and their audience in 12th to 13th / 18th to 19th century Syria”, in *Marginal Perspectives on Early Modern Ottoman Culture: Missionaries, travellers, booksellers*, ed. Ralf Elger and Ute Pietruschka, Halle (Saale),

half binding (added in the library), 18 ff., c. 22,5×16,5 cm, 15 lines, Nashī, red frame

copied 5 Ġumādā II 1287/August–September 1870 by al-Sayyid Ṭālib b. al-Sayyid al-Ḥāğğ Yāsīn b. Ḥasan al-Ḥurasān

تمت الحكايات (...) السيد طالب ابن السيد الحاج ياسين ابن حسن الخرسان (...) وكان الفراغ  
 يوم الجمعة عند الضحى بخمسة ايام داخل من شهر جماد الاخر في سنة [...] الف وما [يتين]  
 128[.]  
 سنة

7) Ms. or. oct. 1505

### Several documents

ff. 1–2: Descriptions of topography, buildings, and places seen on trips on small individual pieces of paper glued together. Beginning with f. 3 is a poem on the affairs of the Damascene *ḥāğğ* caravan, ending on f. 4b with information on commodity prices in vernacular Arabic. Ff. 5–6 is the prose description of the *ḥāğğ* (see Wetzstein's note).

6 ff., ca. 30×19–20 cm, cardboard binding, added in the library,

on f. 6b: "Über den Auszug des Hagg aus Damaskus niedergeschrieben von Ali el-Hakawāti"

note: "Damasc. Gräulscenen im Jahre 1227 d. H. (Mawale von Sālīh al-Hakawati)"

8) Ms. or. oct. 1506

**Fragment containing a poetic list of the chief judges (quḍāt) in Damascus with chronograms signalling their ascension to the post, as mentioned by Wetzstein on a small paper: "Poetisches Verzeichniß der Ḳaḍī's in Damaskus**

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Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Regionalstudien Vorderer Orient, Afrika, Asien der Martin-Luther-Universität, 2013, pp. 17–59, here pp. 47–48.

von Beginn der Türkenherrschaft bis ca. 1030. Der letzte ist Ibn-Maḥmūd al-Walī al-‘Abbāsī welcher die Kuppeln des ‘Obej u. der Weiber des Propheten erbaute”.

ثم ابنتي لصاحب النبي اجل قرا الورى ابي  
ابنية من فوقه ومسجدا بقرها وقد غدا مجددا  
قبا ابزواج النبي التهامي بتربة الباب الصغبر الشامي

Explicit f. 6b:

وقال ذا الفقير للمتين \* اقل ذا الخلق كريم الدين  
عام يرتجي من ربه \* عفوا له عن جرمه وذنبه  
مصليا على النبي واله \* وصحبه وعلى منواله

Then follows in a different hand first a *dūbayt*:

ولما تعذر ان نلتقي \* وزاد النزاع وحد القدم

then a *muwaššah* by Ibn Malik:

هذا الذي قتلى نحا \* ومعرفة حالي نكر

6 ff., ca. 20,5×14,5 cm, cardboard binding, added in the library,

9) Ms. or. oct. 1507

**Riḥlat al-Imām al-Šāfi‘ī (fragment), related by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Yūsuf al-Ardabīlī al-Mālīkī in 553 in the Old Mosque of Fuṣṭāṭ (Miṣr)**

Incipit f. 1a:

هذه رحلة الامام الشافعي رضي الله عنه (...) قال الامام العالم العلامة المقرري ابو القاسم عبد  
العزیز ابن يوسف الاردبيلي المالكي بالجامع العتيق بمصر سنة ثلاث وخمسين وخمسمائة اخبرنا  
الشيخ ابو محمد عبد الله بن فتح المعروف بابن الجشي

Explicit f. 2b:

فأقام بالكلفة فهذا جميع ما لقيته في سفري فافهم ذلك يا ربيع والله اعلم بالصواب والله المرجع  
والماب

2 ff., ca. 33×23 cm, concluded by several *fawā'id*, cardboard binding, added in the library,

on a flyleaf: "Reise Schāfe'īs. (das ganze scheint Dichtung)" Dichtung here not in its meaning of "poetry" but rather "not truthful".

10) Ms. or. oct. 1508

### Muḍammanāt of Šayḥ 'Alī

4 ff., 29,5×19,5 cm, 19th ct., Nashī, cardboard binding, added in the library

on a flyleaf: "Muḍammanāt (von Scheich Ali)". Fragments of popular love poetry.

11) Ms. or. oct. 1509

### Risāla fī faḍl man qara'a Mawlid al-Nabī

15 ff., 15,3×10,0 cm, 11–13 lines, Nashī, copied 18th/19th ct. Wetzstein: "Bruchstück einer damascener Handschrift", cardboard binding, added in the library.

Incipit f. 1b:

الحمد لله الذي نور قلوب العارفين بالحكمة والعرفان الواهب للمؤمنين بفضله واحسانه الجنة  
والحور والغلمان (...) اما بعد فلا ان نذكر نبذة من عشر اعشار الانفاق على مولد رسول الثقلان  
لان من اجله خلقت الموجودات لحق ان يهدى له الروح والجسم والجنان

Explicit f. 14b:

اللهم كما جمعتنا بعلمك اغفر لنا بحكمك وصل على سيدنا ومولانا محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم  
تسليما كثيرا الى يوم الدين ورضي الله تبارك وتعالى عن كل الصحابة اجمعين تم

12) Ms. or. oct. 1510

**Fragment from a Ḥadīṭ-collection (Musnad)**

32 ff., 16 × 12,5 cm, thick Oriental paper, old Nashī, partly vocalized, half binding, added in the library,

Incipit f. 1a:

منه الافاق واشغلت به الافاق ولهت به الابصار والقلوب انما هما مشار اما مولود واما بنت  
وكلهما مقررور الفنا الم ترانه قيل لاهل هذه الدار روجي باهلك فانك لست لهم بدار يا ولادة  
الموت ويا مورثة الاحزان

Explicit f. 32b:

قلت ما فعل ابوك وقومك قالت افناهم الزمان وابداتهم الليالي والايام وبقيت بعدهم كالفرخ  
(راه/واه) الوكر

Readers' statements (*qirā'a*) with certificates of transmission (*iğāza*) on ff. 4b, 16b and 24b, stating that Aḥmad b. Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥādī al-Maqdisī read this with and received the permission to transmit it from Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī al-Saylī in the reciter's house on the hillside of Ġabal Qāsiyūn outside of Damascus on the 7th, 8th and 12th Šawwāl 876 / March 1472.

f. 4b

بعلت [=بلغت] قراءة الى هنا علي الشيخ الصالح المسند الرحلة شمس الدين محمد بن محمد بن علي  
المقدسي الحنبلي السيلي وصح ذلك وثبت يوم الاحد ثاني عشر شوال سنة ست وسبعين وثمان  
ماية بسفح قاسيون ظاهر دمشق المحروس [كذا!] واجاز المسمع ما يجوز له روايته بشرطه  
والحر ... وكتبه احمد بن حسن بن احمد بن عبد الهادي المقدسي وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد واله  
وصحبه وسلم حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

f. 16b

بلغت قراءة الى هنا علي الشيخ الصالح المسند الرحلة شمس الدين محمد بن محمد بن علي السيلي ثم  
المقدسي يوم الاربعاء سابع شوال سنة ست وسبعين وثمان مائة وكانت القراءة بمنزل المسمع  
بسفح قاسيون ظاهر دمشق المحروس [كذا!] واجاز المسمع ما يجوز له روايته بشرطه وكتبه  
احمد بن حسن بن احمد بن عبد الهادي المقدسي والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد  
واله وصحبه وسلم حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

f. 24b

بلغت قراءة الى هنا علي الشيخ الصالح المسند شمس الدين محمد بن محمد بن محمد المقدسي بقراته على  
يوسف الجيني واجاز لي ما يجوز له روايته بشرطه يوم الخميس ثامن شوال سنة ست وسبعين  
وثمان مائة بمنزل المسمع بسفح قاسيون وكتبه احمد بن حسن بن احمد بن عبد الهادي والحمد  
لله وحده وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد واله وصحبه وسلم حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

note by Wetzstein: "Traditionen aus der jahlelie"

13) Ms. or. quart. 1124

**Abū l-Faḥ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Sayyid al-Nās, Nūr al-‘uyūn fi talḥiṣ  
siyar al-Amīn al-Ma‘mūn**

17 ff., 23,5×16,5 cm, 15×10 cm, 15 lines, catch words, Maḡribī, half binding, added  
in the library, copyist: Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Hādī Ḥamad Ṭuwātī, adherent of the  
Sanūsīyya Sufi order, 4 March 1866 in Marsuk, according to a note by G. Rohlfs:  
"4. März 1866 Geschrieben von Mohammed-Abd-el Hadj Hamed Tuati von der  
Sauia Snussi in Marsuk. G. Rohlfs."

Excerpt (*talḥiṣ*) from the biography of the prophet *‘Uyūn al-atar fi funūn al-  
maḡāzī wa-l-šamā’il wa-l-siyar* of the same author

(cat. Wagner 477)

14) Ms. or. quart. 1208

**Collection of 13 mostly Quranic fragments (together 43 folios)**

- I) parchment, 3 folios, 29×20 cm, 20×14 cm, 7 lines, Kufic script, f. 1 Sura 2:138 (ونحن له عابدون) – 2:140 (وما لله)؛ f. 2 Sura 46:15 (امه كرها) – 46:16 (احسن)؛ f. 3 Sura 3:71 (يا اهل الكتاب) – 3:73 (احد مثل)؛ fragment belongs to ms. Berlin Wetzstein II 1916.
- II) parchment, 1 folio, 18,2×12,4 cm, 12,5×7,5 cm, 3 lines, Kufic script, Sura 6:71 (هو الهدى) – 6:72 (واتقوه)؛ this folio has a *waqf*-entry and belongs to the famous Quran of Amāğūr<sup>7</sup> (fig. 10.4, see also the illustration in the contribution of Déroche).
- III) parchment, 1 folio, 20,5×14,6 cm, 15,5×10 cm, 16 lines, Kufic script, Sura 45:23 (الله على علم) – 45:35 (وغر تكم الحياة) (fig. 10.1)
- IV) paper, 1 double folio, 13×17,6 cm, 8,5×13 cm, 10 lines, broken Kufic script, Sura 4:164 (عليك وكلم) – 4:170 (والارض و) and 5:31 (فاواري سوءة) – 5:33 (ولهم في) (fig. 10.2)
- V) parchment, 5 folios, 17,2×11 cm, 12,5×6,5 cm, 7 lines, Kufic script, Sura 6:117 (ربك هو اعلم) – 6:138 (لا يذكرون)؛ fragment belongs to ms. Berlin Wetzstein II 1927.
- VI) parchment, 13 folios, 14,5×9,5 cm, 9,5×6 cm, 7 lines, Kufic script, Sura 13:36 (يفرحون بما انزل) – 14:26 (من قرار) (fig. 10.3)
- VII) parchment, 1 double folio, 10×13,5 cm, 6,5×9,5 cm, 9 lines, broken Kufic script, Sura 3:133 (عرضها السماوات) – 3:138 (بيان للناس) and 3:162 (المصير) – 3:167 (قتلا لا تبعنا كم) (fig. 10.5)
- VIII) parchment, 6 folios, 12,2×7,5 cm, 8×4 cm, 7 lines, Kufic script, Sura 46:5 (اجيبوا داعي) – 46:31 (يستجيب له)
- IX) parchment, 1 folio, 12,5×8 cm, 9×5 cm, 14 lines, very small Kufic script, Sura 6:121 (المشركون) – 6:133 (الغني) (fig. 10.6)
- X) parchment, 4 folios, 15×14,3 cm, 9×9,5 cm, 7 lines, Magribī script, fragment from *Sīrat al-nabī* (?)
- XI) parchment, 1 folio, 20,8×10–11 cm, 18,5×9 cm, 10 lines, early Kufic script, Sura 12:47 (فما حصدتم) – 12:64 (امنتكم على) (fig. 10.7)
- XII) parchment, 1 double folio, 15×10,5 cm, 11×7 cm, 15–16 lines, small Kufic script, Sura 12:64 (هل امنتم) – 13:15 (ولله يسجد) (fig. 10.8)
- XIII) parchment, 1 double folio, 10,5×13,5 cm, 6×8,5 cm, 9 lines, Nashī script, Sura heading in Kufic script, Sura 12:56 (نصيب برحمتنا) – 12:66 (الله لتانني) and 12:104 (تسالهم عليه) – Sura 13 (heading)

7 For the Quran of Amāğūr see François Déroche, “The Qur’ān of Amāğūr”, *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 5 (1990–1991), pp. 59–66.

This small collection includes Quranic specimens of different early scripts and shows a certain paleographic interest of its owner. No. XI is probably the most archaic among these fragments. When Friedrich Schwally (1863–1919) visited the aged Wetzstein at his home in April 1901, he discovered that the latter still owned some Kufic Quran fragments that belong to the specimen Wetzstein has sold to the library earlier on. He tried to convince him to hand it over to the Royal library (obviously without success) and wrote a letter to the Royal library at the same time to inform the director about his finding.<sup>8</sup> However, since its acquisition in 1907, this small collection was kept unnoticed in the strong rooms of the Oriental Department until it turned up during the preparations for the Wetzstein symposium in 2015.



FIGURE 10.1 Quran Fragment  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
QUART. 1208, III, F. 1B

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Schwally to the Royal library in Berlin from 21st April 1901, *Acta betr. die Erwerbung der arabischen Handschriften-Sammlung des Königlichen Consuls Dr. Wetzstein*, vol. 2, SBB-PK, Manuscript department, Cat. III C 18-2.

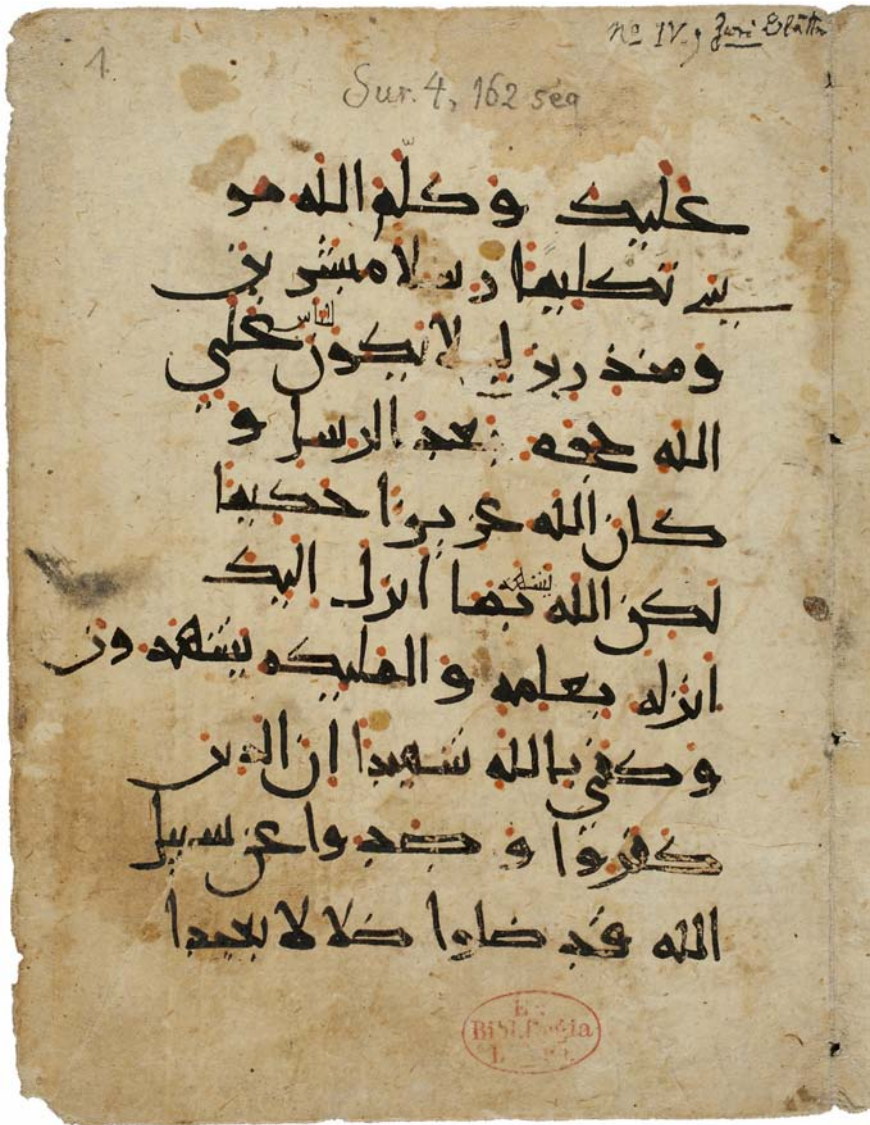


FIGURE 10.2 Quran Fragment  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
 QUART. 1208, IV, F. 1A



FIGURE 10.3 Quran Fragment  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
QUART. 1208, VI, F. 3A



FIGURE 10.4 Quran Fragment  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
QUART. 1208, II, F. 1B



FIGURE 10.5 Quran Fragment  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
 QUART. 1208, VII, F. 1A



FIGURE 10.6 Quran Fragment  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
 QUART. 1208, IX, F. 1B



FIGURE 10.7 Quran Fragment  
 STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
 QUART. 1208, XI, F. 1A



FIGURE 10.8 Quran Fragment  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, ORIENTABTEILUNG, MS. OR.  
QUART. 1208, XII, F. 2A

## 2 Short List of the Prints/Lithographs

- 1) **Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Firūzābādī, al-Qāmūs**, Bombay 1266 [1849], shelf mark Zu 1431.  
on the flyleaf in Wetzsteins hand: "Consul Wetzstein in Damaskus, Preis 385 Piaster 20 Para"
- 2) **Mahdī Ḥān Astarābādī, Durra-i-Nādira**, Tihirān 1271 [1854], shelf mark Um 4090.  
on the flyleaf in Wetzsteins hand: "Diese Biographie Nādir Schah's habe ich am heutigen Tage von meinem Freund, Herrn August von Lecoq, der sie aus dem Orient mitgebracht, zum Geschenk erhalten. Berlin, d. 26 October 1884. J.G. Wetzstein"
- 3) **Koran**, Mumba'ī [Bombay] 1282 [1865], shelf mark Zu 5945 (book missing since ww II).
- 4) **Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Naḥṣabī, Ṭūṭī-nāma**, Constantinople 1271 [1854], shelf mark Zw 10810 (book missing since ww II).
- 5) **Manāqib Aḥmad al-Badawī al-musammāt bi-l-Ġawāhir al-saniyya wa-l-karāmāt al-Aḥmadiyya**, n.p. 1278 [1861], shelf mark Zu 7919/30.

- on the inner book cover in Wetzsteins hand: “Dieses Exemplar der Menā-kib el-Bedawi wurde in Tunis 1870 gekauft. Ladenpreis 15 Frank. Wtzstn.”
- 6) **Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad Ibn Zafar, Sulwan al-mutā‘ fi ‘udwān al-atbā‘**, Tunis 1279 [1862], shelf mark Zu 9304.  
on the flyleaf in Wetzstein’s hand: “gekauft in Tunis 1870. Preis: 16 Frank. JGW”
- 7) **Aḥmad Fāris al-Šidyāq, al-Lafif fi kull ma‘nā ṭarīf**, Malta 1829, shelf mark Zu 4507/50 (book missing since WW II).

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- Wagner, Ewald, *Arabische Handschriften. Teil 1* [= Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, vol. 17B,1], Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1976.



**PART 3**

*Collecting Oriental Manuscripts*





# Collecting Islamic Manuscripts at the Munich Court Library in the Nineteenth Century

## *An Acquisition History*

*Helga Rebhan*

### 1 Introduction

The collection of Oriental manuscripts in the Bavarian State Library in Munich has a long and fascinating history.<sup>1</sup> Since its foundation in 1558 by Duke Albrecht V, the Münchener Hofbibliothek (Munich Court Library) – later the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library) – has pursued a policy of acquiring Oriental literature, thus providing an important link between Europe and the Orient. As part of the larger collection of 19,200 Oriental and Asian manuscripts, the Islamic collection comprises around 4,500 manuscripts from the eighth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries, reflecting in their provenance the Islamic world from Spain to Java and in their content the complete panorama of traditional knowledge.

This collection owes its quantity and quality largely to three acquisition periods. 1) In 1558, the cornerstone of the Oriental collection was laid with

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1 For the history of the collection of Oriental manuscripts kept in the Bavarian State Library, see Georg Reismüller, “Hundert Jahre Bayerische Staatsbibliothek im Dienste der Wissenschaft vom Orient”, in *Die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in den letzten hundert Jahren*, [Sonderdruck aus *Das Bayerland*, 43], Munich, Bayerland-Verl., 1932, pp. 25–30. Günter Grönbold, “Die orientalischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek”, in *Bibliotheksforum Bayern*, 9 (1981), pp. 68–84. Franz Georg Kaltwasser, “Die orientalischen Sammlungen der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek”, in *Das Buch im Orient: Handschriften und kostbare Drucke aus zwei Jahrtausenden*, [Ausstellung 16. November 1982–5. Februar 1983], ed. Karl Dachs, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 1982, pp. 21–29. Helga Rebhan, “Die islamischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek / The Islamic Manuscripts of the Bavarian State Library”, in *Die Wunder der Schöpfung: Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek aus dem islamischen Kulturkreis | The Wonders of Creation: Manuscripts of the Bavarian State Library from the Islamic World*, [Ausstellung 16. September bis 5. Dezember 2010], ed. Helga Rebhan, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2010, pp. 15–27. Helga Rebhan, “Orientalische und asiatische Handschriften und seltene Drucke der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek”, in *Bibliotheken: Innovation aus Tradition*, Rolf Griebel zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Klaus Ceynowa and Martin Hermann, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 322–333.

the purchase of the library of the versatile diplomat and Orientalist Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter (1506–1557). A typical humanist, Widmanstetter was one of the most passionate bibliophiles of his time and collected a treasury of Oriental writings, amounting in its surviving form to between 1,100 and 1,500 printed volumes and 269 manuscripts, among them some fifty Islamic items mostly in Arabic.<sup>2</sup> 2) Exactly 300 years later, the most spectacular acquisition took place when the voluminous library of the French Orientalist Étienne-Marc Quatremère was purchased in 1858. 3) More recently, due to the acquisition policy of the library in place since the latter third of the twentieth century, a large number of Islamic manuscripts have been acquired in the last fifty years, including lavishly illuminated Koran manuscripts.<sup>3</sup>

Since 1973, the Islamic manuscript collection has more than doubled in size from around 2,000 to its present total of 4,500 manuscripts. This article will mainly focus on the acquisitions at the beginning of the nineteenth century and on the purchase of the Quatremère library, which fell into a decade in which important acquisitions of Islamic manuscripts in Germany were made – in Leipzig the Refaiya in 1853,<sup>4</sup> in Berlin the collections of Johann Gottfried Wetstein (1815–1905) in 1851 and 1862, Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876) in 1853–1857 and Aloys Sprenger (1813–1893) in 1857<sup>5</sup> – purchases which provided German Orientalists with fruitful and varied sources relevant to their studies and research.

2 For Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter, see Hans Striedl, “Die Bücherei des Orientalisten Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter”, in *Serta Monacensia: Festschrift Franz Babinger*, Leiden, Brill, 1952, pp. 200–244. Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation: Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Arabistik und Islamkunde in Europa*, Beirut, Steiner, 1995, pp. 276–363. Helga Rebhan, “Die Bibliothek des Orientalisten und Diplomaten Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter”, in *Die Anfänge der Münchener Hofbibliothek unter Herzog Albrecht v.*, ed. Alois Schmid, Munich, Beck, 2009, pp. 112–131.

3 Helga Rebhan and Winfried Riesterer, *Prachtkorane aus tausend Jahren: Handschriften aus dem Bestand der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, [Ausstellung 7. Oktober–28. November 1998], Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 1998.

4 *Refaiya 1853: Buchkultur in Damaskus*, [Katalog [...] begleitend zur Ausstellung “Refaiya 1853 – eine Bücherreise von Damaskus nach Leipzig”, vom 18. April bis 14. Juli 2013 in der Bibliotheca Albertina], ed. Verena Klemm, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 2013. Boris Liebrecht, *Die Rifā'iya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016.

5 Thomas Schmieder-Jappe, *Die Sammlung der orientalischen Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Geschichte, Bestandsstruktur und aufgabenorientierte Bedeutung im nationalen Rahmen*, Berlin, Logos, 2004, pp. 12–14.

## 2 Secularisation

The very beginning of the nineteenth century marked an important point in the history of the Islamic collection due to the secularisation in 1803, the transfer of the Mannheim Court Library to Munich in 1803/04 and the French book theft in 1800. The importance of the Munich library as the greatest collection of mediaeval manuscripts and incunabula in Germany is largely a result of the secularisation. This process led to the dissolution of Bavarian monasteries and the appropriation of their libraries in 1803, allowing the Munich Court Library to enlarge its collections by a tremendous number of valuable manuscripts and printed books.<sup>6</sup> Within the first decade of the nineteenth century, the library's holdings expanded from about 70,000 to more than 500,000 volumes; the number of manuscripts alone grew more than tenfold, from about 2,000 to 22,000. In Bavaria, the process of secularisation had begun with the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773, continued with the closure of nearly one hundred mendicant houses in 1802 and culminated in the dissolution of about seventy monasteries in 1803.<sup>7</sup> The secularisation had a strong impact on the sale of duplicates in the following decades and in turn on the acquisition of Étienne-Marc Quatremère's library.

Among the confiscated items from secularised Bavarian monasteries which were transferred to the Munich Court Library were numerous precious Oriental manuscripts and rare printed books. Pursuing an intellectual engagement with non-Christian religions, in particular with Islam and Judaism, several Bavarian monasteries had purchased Oriental manuscripts, among them manuscripts of the Koran. These were probably acquired by the monasteries in the course of the Catholic Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup> Among these were several Koran manuscripts from the monastery of Benediktbeuern,<sup>9</sup> for example, a sixteenth-century Shi-

6 On the history of the library and its collections, see *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände in Deutschland*, vol. x: *Bayern, München*, ed. Eberhard Dünninger, Hildesheim et al., Olms-Weidmann, 1996, pp. 27–112 (accessible online: [http://fabian.sub.uni-goettingen.de/fabian?Bayerische\\_Staatsbibliothek](http://fabian.sub.uni-goettingen.de/fabian?Bayerische_Staatsbibliothek)).

7 For the secularisation, see *Lebendiges Büchererbe: Säkularisation, Mediatisierung und die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, eine Ausstellung der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, München, 7. November 2003–30. Januar 2004*, ed. Cornelia Jahn and Dieter Kudorfer, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2003. Bettina Wagner, "Duplum Bibliothecae regiae Monacensis: The Munich Court Library and its Book Auctions in the Nineteenth Century", *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 111 (2017), pp. 345–377, at pp. 345–347.

8 See Kaltwasser, "Die orientalischen Sammlungen", p. 24.

9 Joseph Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, Munich, Palm, 1866, Cod.arab. 12, 20, 21, 26, 71.

razi Koran purchased by the abbot Magnus Pachinger in 1738.<sup>10</sup> Another such manuscript came from Polling Abbey – the Koran of Père Lachaise,<sup>11</sup> a Jesuit father who was confessor to Louis XIV. It bears four notes of provenance: apart from the stamp of the Munich Royal Library (as it was named in 1806), it is mentioned on folio 1a that the Koran belonged to “R.P. Dela Chaize” and that it was kept in the Jesuit house in Paris from 1693 (fig. 11.1). The doublure of the rear book cover bears the exlibris of the Augustinian canons’ monastery of Polling, which was a centre of enlightenment, erudition and scholarship in the eighteenth century and held a library of c. 80,000 volumes, the largest library in a Bavarian monastery at that time.<sup>12</sup> In 1763, when the Jesuit order was dissolved in France, the Koran of Père Lachaise was offered for sale and purchased by Gerhoh Steigenberger, a Canon Regular of St. Augustine for the Polling monastic library. The most famous Oriental manuscript in the collection, the so-called Munich Talmud, the only complete manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud which survived the burnings of Hebrew books in the Middle Ages, came from the same monastery.<sup>13</sup>

### 3 Transfer of the Mannheim Court Library to Munich

Almost contemporaneously in 1803/04, the Mannheim Court Library of Prince Elector Karl Theodor (1742–1799), who was a passionate bibliophile, was transferred to Munich. He was a member of the House of Palatinate-Sulzbach, a branch of the House of Wittelsbach. When the old Bavarian line of the Wittelsbach dynasty died out upon the death of Maximilian III Joseph in 1777, Karl Theodor became Prince Elector of Bavaria and moved to Munich. The transfer of his book collection from Mannheim to Munich was completed in 1803/04. His library was one of the greatest of its kind at the end of the eighteenth century. It contained around 100,000 volumes, among them Oriental and Asian

10 Cod.arab. 12 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0003/bsb00036301/images/>). *Prachtkorane*, no. 18.

11 Cod.arab. 6 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00047630/images/>). Ibid. no. 9. *Lebendiges Büchererbe*, no. 73.

12 *Lebendiges Büchererbe*, pp. 10–11.

13 Cod.hebr. 95 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/bsb0003409/images/index.html?id=00003409&groesser=&fip=eayayztssdaszytswwyztseayawqen&no=1&seite=1>). Stefan Wimmer, *Von Sulzbach nach Tel Aviv: Hebräische Neuerwerbungen aus 50 Jahren, 1965–2015*, [Schatzkammerausstellung vom 15. Mai–10. Juli 2015], Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2015, p. 58.



FIGURE 11.1 Quran of Père Lachaise, Three ownership notes, Egypt, 14th century  
BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, COD.ARAB. 6, F. 1A

items such as an Arabic–Malay Genesis from Batavia – its provenance is easy to identify as it bears a binding typical of Karl Theodor’s Bibliotheca Palatina.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4 The French Book Theft

In the year of Wetzstein’s birth, large parts of Europe were restructured after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. This important historical event had a minor impact on the Islamic collection of the Munich Court Library. Less famous than the accrual of books through the secularisation and the Mannheim Court Library was the so-called French book theft of 1800 in which fifteen manuscripts were removed from the Munich Court Library and taken to France.<sup>15</sup> After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, these books were to be returned or, if lost in the meantime, substituted.

Until very recently there were reasons to believe that two splendid manuscripts from Iran came to Munich in the course of this restitution.<sup>16</sup> Both are fine examples of the flourishing Iranian book art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Testifying to their provenance, they bear the library stamp of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris and also that of the Munich Royal Library. As both manuscripts are not mentioned in any of the old Munich library catalogues, their provenance was rather obscure. In the *Salzburger Literaturzeitung* of 1801 Franz Michael Vierthaler, librarian at the Salzburg Court Library, reported that the French commissioner François-Marie Neveu had received eight manuscripts in Arabic script from Salzburg, among them an “Alcoran vorzüglich an Schönheit und Pracht, und die Persischen Romane: Meznun und Leili, Chosru und Schirin” (fig. 11.2).<sup>17</sup> This statement can be applied to both Munich manuscripts from Iran: a Ḥadīṭ collection with a Latin note identifying the

14 Cod.arab. 233 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0001/bsb00018809/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 12.

15 Hans-Otto Keunecke, “Wie soll ich denn eine ganze Bibliothek verstecken?: Die französische Bücherentführung aus München im Jahr 1800 und die Versuche zur Rückgewinnung”, *Bibliotheksforum Bayern*, 7 (1979), pp. 109–128.

16 Cod.pers. 118 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0003/bsb00036806/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 5. Cod.pers. 21 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00048402/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 33.

17 Cit. after Wilfried Schaber, “Nizami, Ilyas ibn Yusuf: Khamsah”, in *Bischof. Kaiser. Jedermann.: 200 Jahre Salzburg bei Österreich, Schatzkammer Salzburg, am Schauptplatz, Begleitband zur Landesausstellung*, Salzburg, [vol. 1], Salzburg-Museum, 2016, pp. 262–269. Judas Thaddäus Zauner, *Beyträge zur Geschichte des Aufenthaltes der Franzosen im Salzburgerischen und in den angränzenden Gegenden*, vol. 1, 1–3, Salzburg, Mayr, 1801, p. 320.



FIGURE 11.2 Nizāmī, *Ḥamsa*, Shiraz, 1500–1550

BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, COD.PERS. 21, F. 125A

manuscript by error as an “Alcoran”, exactly as is mentioned in the *Salzburger Literaturzeitung*, and a *Ḥamsa* by Nizāmī (1141–1209) which contains the epics cited there. According to Vierthaler, both manuscripts were spoils from the siege of Vienna in 1683,<sup>18</sup> most likely previously owned by a high-ranking officer

18 Schaber, “Nizami”, pp. 262–263.

to judge from their lavish appearance and brought from Vienna to Salzburg. In 1801, they came to Paris in the course of the French book theft. When they had to be returned after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the French authorities did not hand these manuscripts back to Salzburg but to the Royal Court Library in Munich as Salzburg was part of Bavaria until April 1816 and Bavaria thus the legal owner.

## 5 Further Acquisitions

During the following decades, the library's director was an Orientalist, Joseph von Scherer (1776–1829), who had obtained a profound knowledge of Arabic, Turkish and Persian during long sojourns in the Middle East.<sup>19</sup> He acquired a few Islamic manuscripts on the antiquarian book market, among them a Koran purchased in Berne which had originally been seized from the Ottoman camp during the second siege of Vienna in 1683.<sup>20</sup>

The Oriental collection was supplemented by two smaller collections of Islamic manuscripts donated by two personal physicians to the Egyptian Viceroy. In 1841, nine Arabic manuscripts were given to the Munich Court Library by the French physician Antoine Barthélemy Clot, known as Clot-Bey (1793–1868),<sup>21</sup> and a further fifty-one Islamic manuscripts by Franz Ignaz Pruner of the Upper Palatinate,<sup>22</sup> known as Pruner-Bey (1808–1882),<sup>23</sup> twenty-nine of which he donated in 1856/57 and the rest in 1860, as his health forced him to leave Egypt.

## 6 Collecting Oriental Manuscripts Systematically

Until this point the acquisition of Oriental manuscripts had proceeded more or less by chance. This changed radically in the second third of the nineteenth century when universities established chairs for Oriental studies on a larger

19 For Joseph von Scherer, see Karl Dachs, *Die schriftlichen Nachlässe in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1970, pp. 137–138.

20 Cod.arab. II. *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 14.

21 Christian Jean Dubois, *Clot Bey: Médecin de Marseille (1793–1868)*, Marseille, Jeanne Lafitte, 2013.

22 For example, *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 41.

23 August Hirsch, "Pruner, Franz", *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. xxvi, Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1888, pp. 675–676. Manfred Vasold, "Franz Pruner (1808–1882): Ein Oberpfälzer praktiziert als Pestarzt in Ägypten", *Die Oberpfalz*, 96 (2008), pp. 208–215.

scale, thereby creating a demand for relevant literature. Responding to this stimulus, the Munich Court Library instituted a policy of purposefully acquiring books corresponding to the needs of the different faculties. In order to cope with the material written in Oriental languages, librarians began to receive an education in them. Martin Schrettinger (1772–1851), one of the pioneers of modern library science, had attended Persian lectures held by Joseph von Scherer. Seeking to institutionalise the competence in Oriental languages, the next library director, Philipp von Lichtenthaler (1778–1857), wrote to King Ludwig I in 1833 suggesting that “trainee librarians should be instructed to take up the study of the known Oriental languages Hebrew, [...] Arabic and Persian.”<sup>24</sup>

## 7 The Acquisition of Étienne-Marc Quatremère’s Library

The status and size of the Oriental collection was strongly influenced by the bold and by no means undisputed decision to acquire the famous collection of books and manuscripts of the French Orientalist Étienne-Marc Quatremère (1782–1857) made by Karl Halm (1809–1882),<sup>25</sup> professor for ancient philology and from 1857 director of the Munich Court and State Library.

Étienne-Marc Quatremère was born in 1782 into a bourgeois Jansenist family.<sup>26</sup> His grandfather was a wealthy mercer who was ennobled by Louis xv. Quatremère had a tragic childhood, as his father Marc-Étienne was executed during the French Revolution in 1794, the family’s property was confiscated and his mother had to flee with him from Paris. From his adolescence, he had taken courses in Greek and Oriental languages. His teacher was the famous Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), who – along with his students after him – dominated French Oriental studies in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

24 Cit. after Kaltwasser, “Die orientalischen Sammlungen”, p. 24.

25 Eduard von Wölfflin, *Gedächtnisrede auf Karl Halm: Öffentliche Sitzung der k. b. Akademie der Wissenschaften ... am 28. März 1883*, Munich, Verl. der Königl. Akad. der Wiss., 1883.

26 For Quatremère’s biography, see Jules Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, “Notice sur M. Étienne Quatremère”, in Étienne Quatremère, *Mélanges d’histoire et de philologie orientale*, Paris, E. Ducrocq, 1861, pp. i–xxxii. Tahmouress Sadjedi Saba, *Étienne Quatremère: Un maître français de la Renaissance Orientale*, [thèse d’état], Montpellier, Univ. Paul Valéry, 1987. Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies*, London, Penguin Books, 2006, pp. 148–149. Alain Messaoudi, “Quatremère Étienne-Marc”, in *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de la langue française*, ed. François Pouillon, Paris, Karthala, 2012 (new and augmented edition), pp. 840–841.

27 Sylvette Larzul, “Silvestre de Sacy Antoine-Isaac”, in *Dictionnaire des orientalistes*, pp. 953–955.



FIGURE 11.3 Étienne-Marc Quatremère (1782–1857)  
 BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK

Quatremère's career was brilliant: he started working in the Bibliothèque impériale in 1807, was appointed Professor of Greek in Rouen two years later, and in 1815 became a member of l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Four years later, in 1819, he was appointed to the chair of Hebrew, Chaldean and Syriac at the Collège de France; from 1832 onwards, he held the chair of Persian at l'École des langues orientales, where he taught until the end of his life. Upon the death of Silvestre de Sacy, he became the director of the *Journal des Savants*. His contemporaries described him as a royalist who loathed the French Revolution, a fervent Catholic, a very hard worker, an introverted scholar and a helpful man who was very generous towards the poor. He devoted sixty years of his life to Oriental studies and is said to have lived for his science alone. Quatremère was one of the most brilliant and learned scholars of his time and well-versed in several Near Eastern languages. He published in different fields of Oriental studies, mainly Arabic philology, geography and the history of Mamluk Egypt, and is best known for his edition of Ibn Ḥaldūn's *Muqaddima*. His voluminous library bears evidence of his broad range of knowledge, his wide interests and his excellent language skills. There can be little doubt that he was a passionate bibliophile.

There are several reasons for the acquisition of his library by the Royal Bavarian Court and State Library and its transfer to Munich. Quatremère was in contact with two Munich Orientalists: Karl Friedrich Neumann (1793–1870),<sup>28</sup> a Sinologist and like Quatremère a specialist in Armenian, and the professor for non-biblical Oriental literature in Munich, Marcus Joseph Müller (1809–1874),<sup>29</sup> who like other German Orientalists (e.g. Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer) had sojourned in Paris – the Mecca of Oriental studies at that time.<sup>30</sup> Müller was later the class secretary of the Philological and Historical Section at the Bavarian Academy of Science. In 1854, he wrote a letter to Quatremère informing him of his election as member of the Bavarian Academy of Science.<sup>31</sup> There are some indications that Quatremère himself did not want his library to remain in France for political reasons, but there might have simply been an economic background – the Bibliothèque impériale in Paris was not able to pay

28 *Die Bücher des letzten Kaiserreichs: Katalog zur Ausstellung über das Leben des China-Forschers Karl Friedrich Neumann mit Exponaten aus seiner Sammlung seltener Sinica*, ed. Yan Xu-Lackner, Erlangen, FAU University Press, 2012.

29 Karl von Prantl, "Marcus Joseph Müller", in *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philologischen und historischen Classe der k.b. Akademie der der Wissenschaften zu München*, Munich, Verl. der Königl. Akad. der Wiss., vol. 1, 1875, pp. 253–258.

30 Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1955, p. 152.

31 See Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, "Notice", pp. xxxi–xxxii.

the extremely high price of 340,000 gold francs asked for it. Finally, director Karl Halm had a strong interest in the acquisition of Quatremère's collection, which was considered a welcome expansion in an area that had been one of the library's strengths since its foundation in the sixteenth century.

One year before the Quatremère library was purchased in 1857, the director Karl Halm had tried hard to buy the library of Aloys Sprenger (1813–1893) but did not succeed, although the Bavarian state had granted him 50,000 guilders for the purchase. He had wanted to acquire Sprenger's library for a reasonable price and in return had promised him a position as an academic librarian for Oriental studies. At the same time Sprenger negotiated with the Royal Library in Berlin, to which his library was eventually transferred. Both Halm and Sprenger published pamphlets on their dispute.<sup>32</sup> The disappointment about his failure to purchase Sprenger's library might have been the reason for Halm's strong desire to acquire Quatremère's collection only one year later.

In 1858, precisely 300 years after the acquisition of Widmanstetter's collection, the Munich library completed the spectacular purchase of Quatremère's library at the considerable final price of 340,000 gold francs. The originally estimated price was 450,000 francs, but through negotiations this was first reduced to 400,000 gold francs and then to 340,000. Quatremère's library originally contained some 50,000 volumes and 1,500 manuscripts, among them 1,250 Oriental manuscripts.<sup>33</sup> At the beginning of 1858, Halm went to Paris, accompanied by two librarians, in order to select duplicates of books already owned by the Munich Court Library – these amounted to 20,000 items, of which they left the largest part in Paris. The manuscripts and remaining 30,000 printed books, including a no longer ascertainable number of volumes in Oriental languages, as well as his modern papers came to Munich.<sup>34</sup> As an indication of the importance of Quatremère's collection, the Munich library had at that time an annual

32 Karl Halm, *Denkschrift über die Verhandlungen zwischen der Direction der k. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek zu München und Dr. A. Sprenger über den Ankauf der Sprenger'schen Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Heidelberg, Mohr, 1857. Aloys Sprenger, *Dr. Halm und die Bibliotheca Sprengeriana*, Heidelberg, Adlon, 1857.

33 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, A-Registatur, Akt B VI Quatremère, Fasz. I and II: a document dated 11 January 1858 reports that, according to *Journal des Savants*, the library encompasses 40,000 volumes and 300 manuscripts. In two letters by Halm from Paris dated March 1858 he notes that the number of volumes surpasses by far the former estimated size of Quatremère's book collection. In Halm's report to the Royal Financial Chamber dated 11 July 1860, the final estimated number of volumes exceeds 50,000 printed items and the number of manuscripts amounts to 1,500 items, among them 1,250 Oriental manuscripts.

34 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, A-Registatur, Akt B VI Quatremère, Fasz. I and II.

intake of merely 3,000 volumes.<sup>35</sup> The purchase price also greatly exceeded the library's regular budget. To finance it, Halm sold a number of duplicates from the Munich library, among them some very valuable books such as incunabula and block books which, by modern standards, would certainly not be judged to be doublets. (Today, multiple copies of incunabula or block books do not constitute duplicates, since every copy has individual features with regard to type-setting, material makeup, and – especially – ownership and history.<sup>36</sup>) Halm's actions were also controversial at the time and hotly discussed in the Bavarian parliament.

Halm had to raise substantial funds for the Munich library in a short time, not only in order to cover the costs of the Quatremère library but also to secure the financial means to buy the Thibaut collection of music manuscripts and to publish a manuscript catalogue compiled by Johann Andreas Schmeller (1785–1852).<sup>37</sup> The obvious solution seemed to be to auction off duplicates, a procedure which had been applied before. In fact, after the secularisation and the expansion by the Mannheim Court Library, duplicate sales were repeatedly carried out, since they offered a chance to free the libraries of cumbersome and unused stock and at the same time raise funds for widening the scope of the collections by purchasing antiquarian and modern literature.<sup>38</sup> The first large-scale auction took place in 1816, while another was planned for 1821.<sup>39</sup> In 1832, the director Philipp von Lichtenthaler sold a fragmentary Gutenberg Bible from the Mannheim Court Library.<sup>40</sup> The need to raise the library's budget through duplicate sales had become increasingly pressing at a time when the idea of building a universal library was commonplace.

While the earlier sales, which had been organised in the city of Munich, were mainly targeted at academics and librarians from Bavaria and Germany, a significant change in marketing strategy and prospective clientele was to take place in the auctions arranged by Halm. They were intended to attract the elite of the international antiquarian book dealers and wealthy customers. It was

35 See Kaltwasser, "Die orientalischen Sammlungen", p. 25.

36 Wagner, "Duplum", p. 373.

37 Max Pauer, "Anton Ruland und Karl Halm: Ein bibliothekarischer Streit um die Dublettenverkäufe vor hundert Jahren", in *Aus der Arbeit des Bibliothekars: Festschrift Fritz Redenbacher*, ed. Bernhard Sinogowitz, Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, 1960, pp. 121–135, at p. 127. Wagner, "Duplum", pp. 365–366.

38 For sales of duplicates, see *passim*: Bettina Wagner, "Dublettenauktionen der Münchener Hofbibliothek in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Aus dem Antiquariat*, 2 (2006), pp. 89–95. Wagner, "Duplum".

39 Wagner, "Duplum", pp. 347–361.

40 Pauer, "Anton Ruland", p. 122, note 7, 3.

bibliophile collectors rather than academics who took an interest in buying bibliographical rarities and to whom the age of an edition or its printing technique mattered as much, or even more than, its content.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps in order to avoid too much publicity in Munich, the auctions were held outside the Bavarian capital: the first auction took place in May 1858 in Augsburg – this was where the antiquarian bookseller Fidelis Butsch, who organised the sale, lived. The auction catalogue was regarded as a sensation on the book market.<sup>42</sup>

Six months later, after the successful acquisition of Quatremère's collection by the Royal Court and State Library in Munich, a series of four auctions, supposedly of unwanted duplicates from the Quatremère library, began in Paris.<sup>43</sup> However, as indicated in the title of the sales catalogue by the phrase "livres [...] provenant pour la plupart de la bibliothèque de feu M. Étienne Quatremère", not all books offered in the Parisian sales between November 1858 and November 1859 had in fact previously been owned by the scholar himself. In order to make the sales of Quatremère duplicates more lucrative, Halm – as he expresses distinctly in the preface to the first sale catalogue – augmented them with early printed books which had entered the Munich Court Library much earlier, largely as a result of the dissolution of monasteries.<sup>44</sup> In the Augs-

41 See Wagner, "Duplum", p. 367.

42 *Catalog einer kostbaren Sammlung von Holztafelgedrucken, Pergamentgedrucken und anderen typographischen Seltenheiten, welche nebst einer namhaften Anzahl auserlesener Bücher aus allen Fächern am Montag den 3. Mai 1858 und folgende Tage bei Fidelis Butsch in Augsburg in dessen Haus Lit. F. Nro. 367 in der Heilig-Kreutz-Strasse öffentlich versteigert werden*, ([Parallel title] *Catalog einer kostbaren Sammlung von xylographischen und typographischen Seltenheiten, welche [...]*), Augsburg, Volkhart, 1858. For a report on the process of the auctions in Augsburg and Paris, see *Neuer Anzeiger für Bibliographie und Bibliothekswissenschaft*, ed. Julius Petzhold, Dresden, G. Schönfeld's Buchhandlung (C.A. Werner), 1858, pp. 122–123, 165–168, 201–208, 233–234, 294, 312–313, 360, 385–387; 1859, pp. 28–29, 97, 129, 163, 218–219, 244–247, 272–274, 292–293, 318–323, 353. Pauer, "Anton Ruland", pp. 121–135.

43 *Bibliothèque Quatremère: Catalogue d'une collection de livres précieux et importants provenant pour la plupart de la bibliothèque de feu M. Étienne Quatremère de l'Institut*, réd. M.Ch. Halm, four vols., Paris, Franck, 1858–1859. The acquisition costs of Quatremère's library amounted to 340,000 gold francs, and the revenue from duplicate sales was estimated at 100,000 francs; see Georg Leyh, "Die Hof- und Staatsbibliothek 1826–1882", [first published 1957; reprinted], in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, ed. Rupert Hacker, Munich, Saur, 2000, pp. 253–262, at p. 260. Wagner, "Duplum", p. 366.

44 In his preface to the catalogue of the first auction of Quatremère's library, which was held at the maison A. Franck in rue Richelieu, Paris, on 25 November 1858 and over the following days, Karl Halm stated: "D' ailleurs pour rendre nos ventes plus intéressantes encore, nous

burg sale of May 1858, a large number of rare items from the Munich Court Library were offered, mostly books printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including a copy of the Gutenberg Bible which Halm describes as “sehr schadhafte Exemplar” (“a very defective copy”)<sup>45</sup> and a vellum copy of the *Catholicon*, a thirteenth-century Latin dictionary which was one of the first books to be printed by Johannes Gutenberg in 1460. It was for the sale of these two important incunabula in particular that Halm was blamed.

Moreover, it seems obvious that he has considerably underrated the value of the duplicates to be offered. Butsch apparently took advantage of him by persuading him to accept the proposal that the auctioneer should be entitled to a commission of one third of the sale’s revenues:

Butsch is even said to have deliberately suggested low estimates in order to conceal how large his profit from the transaction might turn out to be. When the Augsburg sale of 3 May 1858 resulted in a total income of 27,798 guilders for 850 lots – the Gutenberg Bible alone fetched 2,336 guilders – Butsch’s share amounted to 9,266 guilders.<sup>46</sup>

The Munich copy of the Gutenberg Bible, formerly owned by the Augustinian canons of Rottenbuch, was purchased by the Frankfurt dealer Joseph Baer on behalf of the Imperial Library of St Petersburg and was sold in Soviet times via Maggs in London. The Swiss collector Martin Bodmer acquired it in 1928, and the copy is now kept in Cologny near Geneva.<sup>47</sup>

Although the Bavarian King Maximilian II had conceded and ordered the purchase of Quatremère’s library, Karl Halm was attacked strongly for its acquisition. The conservative deputy and librarian from Würzburg, Anton Ruland (1809–1874), who himself had sold duplicates, initiated a severe and heated con-

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ajouterons aux différentes catégories qu’elles embrassent, des exemplaires du fonds de doubles de notre bibliothèque, surtout un quantité d’anciens ouvrages rares, pour relever et compléter un spécialité qui dans la bibliothèque de M. Quatremère paraît être comparativement la plus faible”, see *Bibliothèque Quatremère*, p. ii. A total of more than 10,000 titles were offered in the Quatremère sales, among them c. 400 incunabula and rare books; see Wagner “Duplum”, p. 367, note 64.

45 Halm, *Denkschrift*, p. 7.

46 Wagner, “Duplum”, p. 369.

47 Wagner, “Duplum”, p. 369, note 66; Ilona Hubay, “Die bekannten Exemplare der zweiundvierzigzeiligen Bibel und ihre Besitzer”, in *Johannes Gutenbergs zweiundvierzigzeilige Bibel: Faksimile-Ausgabe nach dem Exemplar der Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin, Kommentarband*, ed. Wieland Schmidt and Friedrich Adolf Schmidt-Künsemüller, Munich, Idion, 1979, p. 146, no. 30.

trovsky in the Bavarian parliament in 1859, claiming that Halm had auctioned off “literary treasures”.<sup>48</sup> In a parliamentary speech delivered in March 1859, Ruland pointed out that the printed books that had been sold were an integral part of the Bavarian cultural heritage owing to their provenance:

Ruland’s outrage was particularly inflamed by the deaccessioning (and often mutilation) of volumes formerly owned by the Nuremberg doctor Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514). Some items had even been cut out of manuscripts or composite volumes to enable them to be sold separately.<sup>49</sup>

The conservative deputy Gustav von Lerchenfeld (1806–1866) spoke out in March 1859:

Sirs, we here in Munich do not have a calling for Oriental literature. We neither have an empire in East India nor property in Algiers. There is no place for us in the Orient and even if a treasure of Oriental manuscripts is stacked, there will be no interest in Oriental affairs, which would be the main requirement for the thriving development of any branch of science.<sup>50</sup>

This astonishing statement (Oriental sources and literature had at that time been bought for 300 years, i.e. since the foundation of the Munich Court Library in 1558) indicates that there was no imperialistic rationale for the purchases of Islamic and other Oriental manuscripts, as in other European countries. Halm wrote about this spectacular purchase that “this acquisition filled the most severe gap in the library in the most desired way”.<sup>51</sup>

48 *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten des Bayerischen Landtages im Jahre 1859: Stenographische Berichte*; for the printed version, see “Zur Geschichte der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek zu München”, *Serapeum*, 20 (1859), pp. 129–142.

49 Wagner, “Duplum”, pp. 370–372.

50 “Meine Herren! Für die orientalische Literatur haben wir in München keinen Beruf. Wir haben weder ein Reich in Ostindien noch einen Besitz in Algier. Wir haben im Orient gar nichts zu suchen, und mag daher hier auch ein Schatz von orientalischen Manuskripten aufgeschichtet werden, so wird doch immer jenes rege Interesse für die Verhältnisse des Orients fehlen, welches die erste Voraussetzung für die gedeihliche Entwicklung irgendeines Zweiges der Wissenschaft ist”, *Serapeum*, 20 (1859), p. 141. *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten des Bayerischen Landtages im Jahre 1859*, Stenographische Berichte, p. 156.

51 “Ankauf der sehr reichhaltigen und werthvollen Sammlung des Orientisten Étienne Quatremère, durch welche Erwerbung die empfindlichste Lücke der Bibliothek in der erwünschtesten Weise ausgefüllt worden ist”, Karl Halm, [preface], in Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften*, p. vii.

Halm wrote a defence in reply to the debates in the Bavarian parliament,<sup>52</sup> which was rebutted by his adversary Anton Ruland in another pamphlet.<sup>53</sup> In an article published around a hundred years later the author adopted Ruland's arguments and asserted that "Quatremère's manuscripts belong to the Indian and East Asian realm and have no inherent relationship to the Oriental funds from the collections of Widmanstetter and Fugger already kept in the library."<sup>54</sup>

The sale of this famous collection to a German neighbour was no less controversial in France, where it was the subject of heated debates in the press. A small consolation for the loss was the conclusion that the price for Quatremère's library had been "a little high" (*un peu cher*), but public opinion was hardly appeased. The paradoxical situation was aptly described by the Englishman Edward Wilberforce in his report on the Royal Library in Munich 1863: "All Paris cried out against the emigration of Quatremère's books to Germany; yet Germany did not seem to welcome them with corresponding enthusiasm."<sup>55</sup>

Unlike the conservative Bavarian deputies, the German Orientalist Emil Rödiger (1801–1874), who was a professor of Oriental languages in Halle, wrote in 1859:

After all what I have heard and seen from Quatremère's library, it is one of the most precious book collections [...] so that even an excellent institution like the Munich Court and State Library has gained a splendid accession by the successful acquisition of this great treasure.<sup>56</sup>

52 Karl Halm, *Erläuterungen zu den Verhandlungen der bayerischen Kammer der Abgeordneten vom 10. März 1859, die k. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München betreffend*, Munich, Palm, 1859.

53 Anton Ruland, *Die in der Schrift des Herrn Oberbibliothekars und Directors Dr. Karl Halm 'Erläuterungen zu den Verhandlungen der bayerischen Kammer der Abgeordneten vom 10. März 1859, die k. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München betreffend' gegen die Kammerverhandlungen vom selben Tage gemachten Angriffe*, Würzburg, Becker, 1859.

54 "[...] bei den orientalischen Manuskripten Quatremères, die insbesondere dem indischen und ostasiatischen Bereich angehörten und zu den bisher an der Bibliothek vorhandenen Orientalia aus den Bibliotheken Widmannstätter und Fugger keine rechte innere Beziehung hatten", see Pauer, "Anton Ruland", p. 126.

55 Edward Wilberforce, *Social Life in Munich*, London, Allen, 1863, p. 226.

56 "Nach allem, was ich von der Quatremère'schen Bibliothek gesehen und gehört habe, ist es eine der werthvollsten Büchersammlungen, [...] so dass selbst ein so grossartiges Institut, wie die Münchener Hof- und Staatsbibliothek ist, durch die glückliche Erwerbung dieses grossen Schatzes einen glänzenden Zuwachs erhalten hat." Emil Rödiger, "Ueber die orientalischen Handschriften aus Étienne Quatremère's Nachlass in München", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 13 (1859), pp. 219–238, here p. 219.

Even if, in retrospect, some of Halm's doublet sales appear highly questionable, there cannot be any doubt that the acquisition of Quatremère's library was the single most important and valuable addition to the Oriental collection in its long history and, beyond that, broadened the scope of the collections significantly, thus strengthening the standing of the institution as an important universal library. Quatremère's collection contains a remarkable number of precious manuscripts of the highest value. Around one third of the Islamic manuscripts kept today in Munich bear witness to its great quality and wealth. It encompasses *c.* 685 Arabic, *c.* 275 Persian and *c.* 200 Turkish manuscripts. The largest part of the most valuable non-religious manuscripts from the Islamic world in Munich had been collected by Quatremère. One example is the famous cosmography *Ağā'ib al-maḥlūqāt wa-ğarā'ib al-mawjūdāt* by Zakariyā' Ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (1203–1283),<sup>57</sup> which is well-known first for its portrayal of the angels (fig. 11.4) and their translucent appearance and particularly for the depiction of the heavenly writers.<sup>58</sup> It contains numerous drawings of the planets and more than 400 miniatures and paintings. It was completed in 1280, three years before the author's death, and is the oldest known textual witness of al-Qazwīnī's cosmography. A second richly and colourful illustrated later version of 1750–1770 from Palestine bears witness to the Islamic book art of the eighteenth century.<sup>59</sup> Dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century is the Munich *Kalīla wa-Dimna* manuscript, which includes seventy-three paintings.<sup>60</sup>

57 Cod.arab. 464 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00045957/images/index.html?id=00045957&groesser=&fip=eayayztssdasyztswwyztseayaewqen&no=12&seite=1>). Richard Ettinghausen, *Arabische Malerei*, Geneva, Skira, 1962, pp. 138–140. Hans-Caspar von Bothmer, *Die Illustrationen des Münchner Qazwīnī von 1280 (Cod. arab. 464): Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis ihres Stils*, [doctoral thesis], Munich, 1971. *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 15.

58 See <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00045957/images/index.html?id=00045957&groesser=&fip=eayayztssdasyztswwyztseayaewqen&no=10&seite=76>.

59 Cod.arab. 463 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/0003/bsb00036421/images/>). Ettinghausen, *Arabische Malerei*, p. 183, pl. 181. *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 17.

60 Cod.arab. 616 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00045958/images/>). Hans-Caspar von Bothmer, *Kalīla wa-Dimna: Ibn al-Muqaffa's Fabelbuch in einer mittelalterlichen Bilderhandschrift, Cod. arab. 616 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 1981. Sabrina Roth, "Kalīla und Dimna in München", in *Von listigen Schakalen und törichten Kamelen: Die Fabel in Orient und Okzident*, [wissenschaftlicher Begleitband zur Sonderausstellung "Tierisch moralisch. Die Welt der Fabel in Orient und Okzident" vom 22. Februar bis zum 31. Mai 2009], ed. Mamoun Fansa, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 2008, pp. 99–114. *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 16.

رفته وبقی اجله عن اشحن بن اسلم ان اهل صلوات الله عليه مثل ملك الموت وقال كيف تصنع  
 اذا كان نفس بالشرق والاخرى بالمغرب ووقع الوباء بارض والفق الرحمان اخرى فقال ادعوا  
 الارواح فتكون من اصبعي هاتين وعن وهب بن وهب رحمه الله عليه ان سليمان مر دوا وعليهما السلام اجب ان يرك  
 ملك الموت حتى يحده صديقا في شعره حتى اتاه كأنه حرج من تحت اية فقال له سليمان عليه السلام من انت  
 فقال ملك الموت فصعق سليمان عليه السلام فقال ملك الموت اللهم اني بعدك سليمان تبارك وتعالى وقد نزل به كتابك  
 اللهم اني اسئلك ان يقويه على ربي فادع الله تعالى اليه ان يصح يدرك على صدره ففعل ذلك تا فاق  
 سليمان عليه السلام فقال له اني اراد عظيم الخلق او كل الملائكة مثل ان قال له شكلا في بيتا ان  
 يدخل الساعنة على منكب ملك قد جا وزر اسنه السموات الشيع وارتفع ذلك سيرة الدعنام ورجلاه قد جاء  
 البرك شبيهة عمر ما به عام  
 وهو فاتح فاه رافع صدقه  
 ايدله فلوادن الله  
 تعالى ان يطير فاه على  
 ما بين السماء والارض لا يطير  
 فقال سليمان لقد وصفت امرأ  
 عظيما فقال انبي الله كيف  
 لورا تبني على صورتي التي  
 اقصر فيها ارواح الكفار  
 فقال له سليمان حتى زائرا  
 او فاضا قال زائرا فصار  
 سليمان صدقة الملك المير يابه  
 زائرا كما يش ويقعد  
 عنده الى زوال الشمس  
 فقال له سليمان يوم ما لي ابراك  
 لا تغدر من الناس فاخذ هذا  
 وتدع هذا فقال ليس المتزل ما علم من السائل انها هي كتب فيها انما المقبرصين تلقى الى بيته الضمير شعاب  
 الى مثلها من الشبه القابله فاما اهل التوحيد فاقصر ارواحهم يحسن في حرمه ايضا محوسه في المتك في روع الى علبين  
 واما اهل الكفر فاقصر ارواحهم سما الى في سمان من قنطرة من ارواحهم الى بحين وادهم الى عالم العيب



FIGURE 11.4 al-Qazwīnī, *Ağā'ib al-mahlūqāt wa-ğarā'ib al-mawjūdāt*, Wasit, 1280  
BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, COD.ARAB. 464, F. 34A

Quatremère's collection encompasses a noticeable number of fine illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscripts, among them three lavishly illustrated manuscripts of the *Šāhnāma*, for example a large format copy from sixteenth-century Shiraz (fig. 11.5),<sup>61</sup> and an item which contains 215 illustrations and is therefore one of the largest pictorial cycles of the *Book of Kings*.<sup>62</sup> Among the Turkish manuscripts are two that are particularly noteworthy: an illustrated copy of Hamdullah Hamdi's *Yūsuf ve Züleyhâ*, dated 1515,<sup>63</sup> and a chessbook, *Şaṭrançnâme*,<sup>64</sup> produced in the first half of the fifteenth century. It contains a remarkable miniature on folio 37b which depicts a popular scene in Islamic art: Prince Khusraw secretly watching Shirin bathing, an allusion to the legendary introduction of the game of chess to Iran by Khusraw, who is said to have brought it from India. The colourful leaves of the tree are painted in an almost impressionistic style otherwise unknown in Turkish book art (fig. 11.6).

In all exhibitions held on Oriental manuscripts from 1910 to 2010, the exhibits from Quatremère's library were the highlights of the displays and enriched the splendid cimelia expositions of the library.<sup>65</sup> Apart from the manuscripts of artistically high rank, Quatremère has collected items across all disciplines of Oriental studies: religion, literature, philology, medicine, science, law, and so on. Very little research has been done on the printed books in Oriental languages contained in the Quatremère library, the exceedingly rare and valuable items document the history of printing in Middle Eastern languages. It is worth mentioning that Quatremère's library included also c. 2,000 imprints in the Chinese, Manchurian and Mongolian languages.

Since Quatremère had never been in the Middle East or North Africa it is amazing how he was able to collect such a large library. We may assume that he enlisted agents to provide him with books and manuscripts from the Middle East in the different languages, that he scoured the antiquarian book market

61 Cod.pers. 15 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0010/bsb00106323/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 34.

62 Cod.pers. 10 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00043870/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 22.

63 Cod.turc. 183; *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 37.

64 Cod.turc. 250 (accessible online: <http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00049708/images/>). *Wunder der Schöpfung*, no. 38.

65 Helga Rebhan, "Ausstellungen orientalischer und asiatischer Bestände der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek", in *Information – Innovation – Inspiration: 450 Jahre Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, ed. Rolf Griebel and Klaus Ceynowa, Munich, Saur, 2008, pp. 639–665. In the exhibition *Wunder der Schöpfung*, in the first part of which forty-three manuscripts acquired up to 1910 were displayed, twenty-seven items originate from Quatremère's library: nos. 6, 9–11, 15–20, 22–32, 34, 37–40, 42–43.

in Paris and elsewhere in Europe, and that he endeavoured to acquire special collections from colleagues who were experts in Oriental studies or who had sojourned in the Orient. The catalogues by Joseph Aumer on Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts kept in Munich provide information on a number of Quatremère's sources if the latter are mentioned in secondary notes or entries of provenance in the manuscripts.<sup>66</sup>

Around sixty-five Islamic manuscripts originate from the library of Quatremère's teacher Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838), who is regarded as the founder of modern Oriental studies and whom Quatremère succeeded at l'École des langues orientales. Some fifty manuscripts bear the note "Manuscrit rapporté du Caire par J.J. Marcel" (1776–1854),<sup>67</sup> who had participated in the French campaign to Egypt.<sup>68</sup> Jean-Joseph Marcel (1776–1854) was an Arabist, printer and an antiquities collector. He joined Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt as a "savant" and head of the printing office "l'Imprimerie nationale" in Cairo and spent three years in Alexandria and Cairo (1798–1801). When he returned to France in 1803, Marcel was appointed Director of the later Imperial Press, where he remained until 1815. His collection of Islamic materials included 3,000 manuscripts, a few hundreds of which can now be found in French, German and Swiss libraries.

Further secondary notes refer to the Orientalist Joseph-Marie Jouannin (1783–1844);<sup>69</sup> Auguste Andréa de Nerciat (1782–1847), who was chief dragoman at the French consulate in Smyrna;<sup>70</sup> Frederick North (1766–1827), the 5th Earl of Guilford, a politician and colonial officer (and governor of Ceylon);<sup>71</sup> John Staples Harriot (1780–1839),<sup>72</sup> a British army officer stationed in India in the service of the East India Company and known as one of the owners of the

66 Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften*; Joseph Aumer, *Die persischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, Munich, Palm, 1866; Joseph Aumer, "Türkische Handschriften", in *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München mit Ausschluß der hebräischen, arabischen und persischen. Nebst Anhang zum Verzeichnis der arabischen und persischen Handschriften*, Munich, Palm, 1875, pp. 1–96.

67 E.g. Cod.arab. 616, folio 1a (<http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00045958/images/index.html?id=00045958&groesser=&fip=eayayztssdaszytswwyztseayaewqen&no=1&seite=3>).

68 M. Belin, "Notice nécrologique et littéraire sur M. J.J. Marcel [...] ancien directeur de l'imprimerie impériale", *Journal asiatique*, 5.sér., 3 (1854), pp. 553–562.

69 Frédéric Hitzel, "Jouannin Joseph-Marie", in *Dictionnaire des orientalistes*, pp. 555–556.

70 *Devhatü l-Meşâyih*, ed. Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, vol. 1, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2005, p. 96.

71 See *The peerage* (<http://www.thepeerage.com/p30044.htm#i1300439>).

72 *The East-India Military Calendar: Containing the Services of General and Field Officers of the Indian Army*, [ed. John Philippart], London, Kingsbury, 1823, p. 275.



FIGURE 11.5 Firdawsī, *Šāhnāma*, Luhrāsb's ascension to the throne  
BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, COD.PERS. 15, F. 296B–297A





FIGURE 11.6 *Şaṭraṅnâme*, Istanbul (?), 1510–1550  
 BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, COD.TURC. 250, F. 37B

key manuscript of the *Ġāmi‘ al-tawārīḥ* by Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh (1247–1318),<sup>73</sup> an important medieval manuscript dealing with Mongol history; and Everard Scheidius (1742–1794),<sup>74</sup> a Dutch theologian and Orientalist.

Once the Quatremère library had come to Munich, the question arose of how to put it in proper order and facilitate its use. The Oriental manuscripts kept in the Royal Library bore a more general shelf mark, “Codices orientales”, used for all kinds of manuscripts in Oriental and Asian languages (except Hebrew items, which were labelled “Cod.hebr.”). First, Halm introduced new shelf marks for Oriental manuscripts, which were arranged according to languages. Marcus Joseph Müller, an expert in Semitic studies, examined the manuscripts and established a list which was useful to his pupil Joseph Aumer (1835–1922), the cataloguer of the Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts of the Munich Court Library.<sup>75</sup> In 1866, a few years after the acquisition, Joseph Aumer published two catalogues documenting the recently enlarged collections of Arabic and Persian manuscripts. These were followed by a catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts, which was printed in 1875.<sup>76</sup>

## 8 The Munich Glaser Collection

At the very beginning of the twentieth century, the Oriental collection was notably augmented through the acquisition of the Glaser collection, a bundle of Yemeni manuscripts, which the Italian merchant Giuseppe Caprotti (1869–1919) had gathered in Yemen. In 1902, 157 Arabic manuscripts, most of which were of Yemeni origin and in many cases of great antiquity, were purchased by the Royal Court and State Library through the Austrian traveller and scholar Eduard Glaser (1855–1908).<sup>77</sup> There are other collections gathered by Glaser in

73 “John Staples Harriot”, in *Philosophical Libraries: Private Libraries from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century*, Pisa, Scuola normale superiore, (accessible online: <http://picus.unica.it/index.php?page=Filosofo&id=189&lang=en>).

74 “Scheidius (Everard)”, in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, vol. x, Leiden, Sijthoff, 1937, pp. 881–882.

75 See Karl Halm, [preface to] Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften*, pp. vii–viii.

76 Aumer, *Die arabischen Handschriften*; Aumer, *Die persischen Handschriften*; Aumer, “Türkische Handschriften”.

77 Gratzl, Emil, “Die arabischen Handschriften der Sammlung Glaser in der königl. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek zu München”, *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 22 (1917) [= *Orientalistische Studien Fritz Hommel zum 60. Geburtstag am 31. Juli 1914 gewidmet von Freunden Kollegen und Schülern*, vol. II, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrich, 1918], pp. 194–200. Walter Dostal, *Eduard Glaser – Forschungen im Yemen: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung in*

Berlin, Vienna and London. Lately the Digital Bab al-Yemen project at the Free University of Berlin has reunited the digitised manuscripts of the Glaser collections of Berlin, Vienna and Munich in a single online library, which has been implemented as part of the Google Cultural Institute.<sup>78</sup> The most recent initiative to preserve the Yemeni manuscript culture and to provide access to it is “*The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition (ZMT): A Digital Portal*,” a joint project initiated by the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, in partnership with the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) in Minnesota. It consists of two components: a digital portal, which is housed on the website of the Institute for Advanced Study, and HMML’s virtual reading room (vHMML), which serves as the repository of digital surrogates of manuscript codices.<sup>79</sup> A number of digitized manuscripts from the Glaser fund kept in Munich is included, other digitized items will be implemented in the near future.

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- 78 *The Glaser Collections: Bringing Together the Islamic Heritage of Yemen*, Berlin, The Digital Bab al-Yemen, 2014 (<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/the-glaser-collections/gQs9TMxj>).
- 79 Sabine Schmidtke, *The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition: Preserving, studying and democratizing access to the world heritage of Islamic manuscripts*, Princeton, 2017 (<https://www.ias.edu/idea/2017/schmidtke-zaydi-manuscript-tradition>).

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# Manuscript Acquisitions and Their Later Movements

## *A Further Note about the Case of the Lewis Quranic Manuscript*

*Alba Fedeli*

### 1 Acquisition of Fragments from the Codex Rescriptus Sinaiticus

MS CUL Or. 1287 is a 162-leaf codex of Christian Arabic homilies of the Church Fathers produced in the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai in the second half of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century by assembling and adapting several parchment leaves from which the original text was erased or washed.<sup>1</sup> The Cambridge manuscript was purchased by Agnes Smith Lewis and is the largest part of an original codex of which a few further leaves are scattered among different institutions in Beuron and Birmingham (UK). Among the materials used for producing the homilies codex, the scribe used a few leaves belonging to two Quranic manuscripts<sup>2</sup> and other leaves containing texts in

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- 1 Agnes Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca: The Protevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae, with Texts from the Septuagint, the Corân, the Peshitta, and from a Syriac Hymn in a Syro-Arabic Palimpsest of the fifth and other Centuries, with an Appendix of Palestinian Syriac texts from the Taylor-Schechter Collection*, [Studia Sinaitica, No. XI], London, C.J. Clay and Sons, 1902; Agnes Smith Lewis and Alphonse Mingana, *Leaves from Three Ancient Qurâns Possibly pre-Othmânic with a List of their Variants*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1914; Alba Fedeli, "Mingana and the Manuscript of Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis, One Century Later", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 11/3 (2005), pp. 3–7; Alba Fedeli, "The Digitization Project of the Qur'anic Palimpsest, MS Cambridge University Library Or. 1287, and the Verification of the Mingana-Lewis Edition: Where is salâm?", *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, 2/1 (2011), pp. 100–117; Alba Fedeli, "The Provenance of the Manuscript Mingana Islamic Arabic 1572: Dispersed Folios From a Few Qur'anic Quires", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 17/1 (2011), pp. 45–56 and Alain George, "Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana de Cambridge: témoin ancien de l'histoire du Coran", *Comptes Rendus de L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1 (2011), pp. 377–429; Alba Fedeli, "Early Qur'anic Manuscripts: Their Text, and the Alphonse Mingana Papers Held in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Birmingham", PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2015.
  - 2 The Quranic text has been edited by Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca* (partial edition); and Mingana and Lewis, *Leaves* (incomplete edition). An electronic edition is available at <http://cal-itsee.bham.ac.uk/itseeweb/fedeli/start.xml> (Alba Fedeli, *Qur'anic Transcriptions Produced by Alba Fedeli for her PhD Thesis*, Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 2015) and the edition

Syriac,<sup>3</sup> Greek<sup>4</sup> and Armenian. Despite the variety of texts reused in assembling this *codex rescriptus* Sinaiticus, it is mainly known as the Lewis Quranic palimpsest, with reference to part of its content, though Vaccari proposed to name it the Lewis-Beuron codex, thus pointing to the ownership of its two fragments identified in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1 *Hidden Names: the Mingana Fragment and Tischendorf's Role*

The acquisition of the Birmingham Quranic fragment identified in 2011<sup>6</sup> after seventy years of misrepresentation of its (unknown) content has already been traced and connected to Sinai in previous works.<sup>7</sup> Alphonse Mingana purchased the Quranic fragment (Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 150)<sup>8</sup> from the antiquarian dealer Erik von Scherling in October 1936. The Quranic half-leaf was part of an entire lot of Sinaitic fragments that Mingana, a manuscript hunter, followed with great perseverance for about twenty years.<sup>9</sup>

According to the receipt acknowledged by von Scherling, the lot of Sinaitic artefacts included the actual manuscripts Mingana Christian Arabic Additional 123 to 208, among which no. 124 also belonged to the same palimpsest codex.<sup>10</sup> The fragment Add. 124 is a bifolium whose *scriptio superior* is likely to include

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of the small and large leaves in the Cambridge Digital Library, <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/minganailewis>.

3 Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*.

4 Natalie Tchernetska, "Greek Oriental Palimpsests in Cambridge: Problems and Prospects", in *Literacy, Education and Manuscript Transmission in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. C. Holmes and J. Waring, Leiden, Brill, 2002, pp. 243–256.

5 Alberto Vaccari, "I Palinsesti biblici di Beuron", *Biblica*, 11 (1930), pp. 231–235.

6 Fedeli, "Digitization project".

7 Fedeli, "Provenance", "Digitization project" and "Mingana Qur'anic manuscripts"; George, "Palimpseste Lewis-Mingana".

8 The half-leaf MS Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 150 and the half-leaf of MS Cambridge University Library Or. 1287, i.e. f. 60 (103), fit together perfectly as an original entire leaf. The Mingana collection has many fragments of the dispersed Bibliotheca Sinaitica and there are further examples of original single leaves divided in two halves in different hands, such as the half-leaf Hiersemann MS 500/3 f. 61 and the completing half-leaf Mingana Syriac 653; see Paul Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaitiques dispersés III: Les fragments syriaques de Londres et de Birmingham", *Oriens Christianus*, 94 (2010), pp. 14–57, here p. 46 (MS no. 653).

9 See Alba Fedeli, "Isolated Qur'anic Fragments, The Case of the Three Papyri from the Mingana Collection", in *Proceedings of the Conference 'Fragmentation and Compilation: The Making of Religious Texts in Islam' (London, Institute of Ismaili Studies, May 2012 and May 2013)*, ed. Asma Hilali, forthcoming; and Fedeli, "Mingana Qur'anic manuscripts".

10 Mentioned in Fedeli, "Provenance", p. 109 and p. 117 (the reproduction of Erik von Scherling's receipt for the purchase of Sinaitic fragments).

part of the homily of John Chrysostom on the humility of Christ,<sup>11</sup> the Publican and the Pharisee, while its *scriptio inferior* includes the Armenian text of the Epistles to the Hebrews (Hebrews XI, 15–23 and 24–32), as proposed by Sebastian Brock in his 1965 article.<sup>12</sup> This contrasts with the third volume of the Mingana collection catalogue and its description as non-Biblical text, possibly a legal code.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the lot acquired from von Scherling contained MS Add. 171, which is likely to be the index of the entire codex of Christian Arabic homilies, listing its sixteen sermons and information about the manuscript context. Fragment no. 171 in fact reads that its manuscript belonged to the Monastery of Saint Catherine and stayed permanently there for the benefit of the monks of Mount Sinai.<sup>14</sup> The connection of the entire lot of Sinaitic fragments with Constantin Tischendorf has been partially suggested through the materials held in the Mingana correspondence<sup>15</sup> and in particular by means of Mingana's report to the Selly Oak Colleges Trust in 1936.<sup>16</sup> The scholar confidentially revealed the connection between the manuscripts and Tischendorf, who removed such precious fragments from Saint Catherine's monastery, but he also did this publicly, as he released a few sentences alluding quite explicitly to Tischendorf's heritage and Sinai.<sup>17</sup> Later,<sup>18</sup> Mingana made every possible effort in

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- 11 John Chrysostom in Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, *Die Übersetzungen*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944, pp. 337–354.
- 12 Sebastian P. Brock, “An Early Armenian Palimpsest Fragment of Hebrews”, *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. 2 (1965), pp. 129–134.
- 13 The catalogue interprets the layout of the fragment as a single leaf with the text arranged in two columns, rather than as a bifolium. See Alphonse Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, vol. III, *Additional Christian Arabic and Syriac Manuscripts*, Cambridge, W. Heffer and Sons, 1939, p. 20 (no. 166).
- 14 The index is described in Fedeli, “Mingana Qur’anic manuscripts”.
- 15 Fedeli, “Provenance”, “Digitization Project” and “Mingana Qur’anic Manuscripts”.
- 16 The report has already been mentioned in Kristian S. Heal, “Notes on the Acquisition History of the Mingana Syriac Manuscripts”, in *Manuscripta Syriaca: Des sources de première main. Cahiers d’études syriaques IV*, ed. F. Biquel Chatonnet and M. Debié, Paris, Geuthner, 2015, pp. 29–30.
- 17 See, for example, Mingana, “MSS. from the Sinai Library: History of Lost Fragments: Letter to the Editor of the Times”, *The Times*, 6 November 1936: “In order to save future scholars the useless trouble of searching for these lost fragments and manuscripts, I would state here that they now form part of my collection”, referring to Margaret Dunlop Gibson's statement: “One is ashamed to think that some scholar in former years must have abused the hospitality of the monks, and that a choice collection of title-pages may be found in some European library.” Margaret could not have imagined that such a collection of title pages could have become part of the Mingana Collection.
- 18 The reaction to Mingana's “Letter to the Editor”, mentioned in previous footnote, was quite

the catalogue to hide such a provenance because of the possible legal issues about the ownership of the Sinaitic manuscripts in such a delicate period, on account of the codex Sinaiticus polemics.

The story of the fragment MS Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 136 allows us to confirm Tischendorf's provenance of the entire lot MSS 123 to 208 by adding further details. In 1978, Michel van Esbroeck identified fragment Add. 136 as the lost leaf of a six-leaf group that was part of codex Or. 4226 of Strasbourg.<sup>19</sup> The six leaves arrived in St Petersburg through Tischendorf in 1853, as they were described by Fleischer in his *Beschreibung der von Prof. Dr. Tischendorf im J. 1853 aus dem Morgenlande zurückgebrachten christlich-arabischen Handschriften*.<sup>20</sup> Thus, if MS Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 136 is part of the manuscripts that Tischendorf brought to Europe after his journey to Cairo and Sinai in 1853, this confirms that the entire lot acquired by Mingana through von Scherling is connected to Tischendorf – as revealed by the 1936 report – and his travels in 1853. Tischendorf's letter from Cairo of 19 March 1853 circumstantiates the presence of more than ten ancient, short palimpsests.<sup>21</sup>

A further interesting fragment of lot Add. 123 to 208 is fragment no. 125. It is a palimpsest leaf whose *scriptio superior* includes ecclesiastical canons of marriage in Arabic, while its *scriptio inferior* includes traces of an Old Testament lectionary, as proposed by Sebastian Brock.<sup>22</sup> According to the scholar, the Birmingham fragment probably once belonged to the seventy-four-leaf manuscript acquired by Agnes Smith Lewis that was later donated to the library of Westminster College in Cambridge. The Sinaitic Lewis lectionary and its

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strong. The then Governor of Sinai wrote a further letter to the editor of the *Times* demanding the return of the lost fragments belonging to the Sinai library, see C.S. Jarvis, "MSS. from the Sinai Library: To the Editor of the Times", *The Times*, 13 November 1936.

19 Michel van Esbroeck, "Un feuillet oublié du codex arabe or. 4226, à Strasbourg", *Analecta Bollandiana: Revue critique d'hagiographie*, 96 (1978), pp. 383–384.

20 MS no. IV in Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, "Beschreibung der von Prof. Dr. Tischendorf im J. 1853 aus dem Morgenlande zurückgebrachten christlich-arabischen Handschriften", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 8 (1854), pp. 584–587, here p. 587.

21 Letters typed by Tischendorf's daughter in Michael Featherstone, *The Discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus as Reported in the Personal Letters of Konstantin Tischendorf*, online resource available at [https://www.academia.edu/1123038/The\\_Discovery\\_of\\_the\\_Codex\\_Sinaiticus\\_as\\_reported\\_in\\_the\\_personal\\_letters\\_of\\_Konstantin\\_Tischendorf](https://www.academia.edu/1123038/The_Discovery_of_the_Codex_Sinaiticus_as_reported_in_the_personal_letters_of_Konstantin_Tischendorf), accessed on 28 January 2019.

22 Sebastian P. Brock, "Notes on some texts in the Mingana Collection", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 14 (1969), pp. 205–226, here pp. 225–226 and Patricia E. Easterling, "Greek Manuscripts in Cambridge: Recent Acquisitions by College Libraries, the Fitzwilliam Museum and Private Collectors", *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 4/3 (1966), pp. 179–191, here p. 189.

Birmingham fragment are pieces of the complicated story of the scattered Sinaitic fragments, recently interconnected by Paul Géhin in his retracing of the movements of the manuscripts from Sinai to Paris, Milan, Birmingham and London.

### 1.2 *Nameless Collectors: the Lewis Codex and the Commercial Antiquary on His Travels*

If most of the Sinaitic manuscripts from the Mingana collection are the results of Tischendorf's travels, the substantial Cambridge section of the codex is probably part of later manuscript movements from Sinai to private European collectors at the end of the nineteenth century. The information about the Lewis codex is quite vague, with Lewis' reference to the purchase in Suez<sup>23</sup> from a commercial antiquary on his travels in 1895.<sup>24</sup> Such a vague reference to Suez supports a few theories about the authenticity of the manuscript itself, as insinuated for example by al-Qidwai in his 1915 review of the edition of the Quranic leaves: "The palimpsest was acquired from very suspicious hands, and can have no legal value. From an antiquarian point of view also there is every possibility of its having been faked."<sup>25</sup> In another review of the same 1914 edition, Henri M. Léon was more critical of the genuineness of the manuscript bought from "a nameless 'commercial antiquary on his travels'! A nameless wanderer from no one knows where, and whose present locale [...] we know not!",<sup>26</sup> alluding to the faked artefacts manufactured in Switzerland, Germany and Birmingham, the industrial city in which Mingana lived.<sup>27</sup>

In the travel account *In the Shadow of Sinai*, narrated by Agnes Smith Lewis, and in the available correspondence, there is no reference to such an acquisition made during her trip in 1895. Agnes wrote that she and her twin sister, Margaret Dunlop Gibson, travelled to Cairo via Marseille and stayed in Suez from 28 to 31 January before going to Sinai. During their return journey they left Sinai on 14 March and for two weeks Agnes had to stay in bed in Suez as Mar-

23 Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, p. ix.

24 Mingana and Lewis, *Leaves*, p. v.

25 al-Qidwai, "A Glance at the Quranic Palimpsest: Review of Mingana – Smith Lewis, Leaves From Three Ancient Qurâns Possibly Pre-'Othmânic", *Islamic Review and Muslim India*, 3 (1915), pp. 234–236, here p. 235.

26 Henri M. Léon, "Review of Mingana – Smith Lewis, Leaves From Three Ancient Qurâns Possibly Pre-'Othmânic", *Islamic Review and Muslim India*, 3 (1915), pp. 239–250, here p. 241.

27 "Others of the same ilk, if you are interested in Egyptology, can provide you with 'genuine scarabs,' etc., 'obtained from the tombs of the Pharaohs,' 'thousands of years old,' but suspiciously resembling similar articles manufactured by the gross in Birmingham", *ibid.*, p. 242.

garet wrote to Rendel Harris: “Agnes has been in bed since she arrived with a very slow and obstinate carbuncle [... and] cannot walk across the room.” Only on 4 April did Agnes send a few notes to Rendel Harris from Suez – “I have had my first little walk today for a fortnight” – and then they proceeded to Beirut and modern Syria.<sup>28</sup> In this account, there is no mention of the purchase of the Christian homilies codex.

Despite the lack of details about the purchase, it is improbable that the Lewis artefact is related to Tischendorf and his manuscript inheritance in Europe.<sup>29</sup> Her codex is rather part of later movements of manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century based in Egypt. A few elements contribute to drawing a picture of the Sinaitic manuscript trade in the period after 1889, such as, for example, the evidence of the Maccabees manuscript and the stories narrated by the sisters Agnes and Margaret. Agnes wrote in her travel account that during their visit to Sinai in 1893, Rendel Harris noticed that several important manuscripts which he had seen in 1889 had disappeared from the Convent Library and that “this [...] led him to suspect and declare openly that several thefts must have taken place since his previous visit”.<sup>30</sup> The case of the lost manuscript of Maccabees, which was studied by Rendel Harris and then disappeared, is indicative of the trade of manuscripts stolen from Sinai at that time. “An itinerant dealer in antiquities” went to the twin sisters in their hotel room in Cairo in January 1895 offering to sell them the lost Maccabees manuscript. Agnes reported the theft to the tribunal and in the end the Maccabees returned to the monastery. The facts are told in *In the Shadow of Sinai*, where the itinerant dealer was supposed to have bought the manuscript from a thief, while in the correspondence of the sisters with Rendel Harris there is a more precise report on the matter. Thus, Margaret mentions the suspicions from the monastery’s side about the thief:

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28 Janet Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels*, London, Vintage Books, 2010, p. 230.

29 However, it is worth noting that Mingana wrote to von Scherling about the Sinai fragments he was going to acquire, adding: “I discussed much with my friends Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, while they were still alive, the action of the scholar who cut off these leaves from MSS. in Mount Sinai” (copy of a typed private letter of Mingana to Erik von Scherling, 8 October 1936 in Mingana papers, DA66, mentioned in Fedeli, “Provenance”, p. 109). See also the reference to “the laudable example of Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson in not referring explicitly to the scholar responsible for the abuse of hospitality” in Mingana, “MSS. from the Sinai Library”.

30 Agnes Smith Lewis, *In the Shadow of Sinai: A Story of Travel and Research from 1895 to 1897*, Cambridge, Macmillan and Bowes, 1898, p. 3.

a certain Swiss German pseudo-missionary,<sup>31</sup> who has spent so much of his time at Sinai, and has been lately in prison here for three months for theft

and also that the dealer who offered the manuscript to Agnes named

a dragoman who he says gave him the MS but could a dragoman actually steal one? [...] If you should hear of a dragoman named Joseph Tanous (?) in America, where he is said to be, you might do good by telling us where he is – for you and Agnes seem to get wonderful clues.<sup>32</sup>

Further examples of manuscripts that disappeared from Sinai after Rendel Harris' visit in 1889 are MS Chabot 49 (ff. 174–180), now in the Ambrosiana Library, and the leaf MS Mingana Syr. 641. These eight leaves are the first quire of MS Sinai Syr. 16<sup>33</sup> that Harris saw in 1889 and were removed from Sinai between 1889 and 1894, when J. Stenning noticed that the manuscript did not agree with the description given by Rendel Harris.

A further episode points to the period around 1893, as suggested by a detail mentioned by Erik von Scherling in his correspondence with Mingana's secretary. On 8 December 1937, he wrote:

the mss which I offered to Dr Mingana, they are still available, and there is another very early palimpsest-codex, described in the last issue of *Rotulus*. This ms is from the same source as the other pieces.<sup>34</sup>

31 The correction of "Swiss" to "German" is in the original handwritten letter.

32 Handwritten letter of Margaret Dunlop Gibson to Rendel Harris, Cairo, 29 January 1895 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WGL). There is a dragoman named Joseph Tanous who is mentioned in Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*, New York, American Tract Society, 1878, pp. 135–136: "Our dragoman is the general provider, guide, and interpreter, as the word indicates. He is an indispensable necessity in the East since the days of Herodotus, who employed one in Egypt. We have no reason to complain of Joseph Tanous. He is a Maronite Christian from Lebanon, intelligent, courteous, and sober, and behaved well till he got to Jerusalem. He speaks Arabic, French, and Italian, but not a word of English or German." However, there is no proof of correspondence between the two dragomans.

33 Paul Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés II: les fragments théologiques syriaques de Milan (Chabot 34–57)", *Oriens Christianus*, 91 (2007), pp. 1–24, here p. 16.

34 Typed and signed letter of Erik von Scherling to the secretary of Alphonse Mingana, Leiden, 8 December 1937 (correspondence held at the Cadbury Research Library, Mingana Papers DA66).

The Sinaitic palimpsest mentioned by von Scherling is described in *Rotulus* as purchased from a German traveller:

The precious volume had been offered in pawn about 1893 together with other Syriac mss. to a German traveller who had lent money to the monastery of St. Catherina. It remained in this way many years in private possession without being the object of scientific examination.<sup>35</sup>

Although this does not clarify the trade channel used by Agnes Smith Lewis, who mentioned only a commercial antiquary who passed by Suez in 1895, they trace the context of the removal of manuscripts from Sinai in that period, contrasting with Tischendorf's actions during his travels in 1844, 1853 and 1859. Nevertheless, it is worth observing that Mingana, referring to the lost fragments from Sinai that he had purchased, noted:

I will follow the laudable example of Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson in not referring explicitly to the scholar responsible for the abuse of hospitality of which Mrs. Gibson, perhaps unjustly, complains; nor will I allude to the circuitous way in which the fragments reached me.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.3 *Famous Collectors of the Sinaitic Dispersed Library: the Grote Fragment*

The fourth fragment of the Christian homilies is now held in Beuron, i.e. Erzabtei show-case 46,<sup>37</sup> and a fifth fragment is possibly also in the same library, i.e. eleven Armenian leaves listed by Assfalg and Molitor.<sup>38</sup> Show-case 46 is

35 Erik von Scherling, "Evangelia in versione syro-palaestinenesi saec. VI sub textu liturgico sermone georgica saec. X codex rescriptus", *Rotulus: A Bulletin for Manuscript-Collectors*, 4 (1937), item no. 1900, pp. 31–32.

36 Mingana, "MSS. from the Sinai Library".

37 Beuron, ms. show-case 46 and MS Cambridge University Library Or. 1287, f. 11 (Alfred Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments*, Berlin, Weidmann, 1914, p. 43 and Alfred Rahlfs and Detlef Fränkel, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments I, 1. Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, p. 43 and 48) fit together. They include Genesis in the *scriptio inferior*.

38 In 1930, Vaccari identified that the Lewis codex and the Beuron leaf (i.e. Erzabtei show-case 46) were part of the same manuscript. It is probable that the eleven palimpsest leaves of Erzabtei Beuron were also part of the same manuscript. On their *scriptio inferior*, these eleven leaves have portions of an Armenian translation of the Epistles to the Hebrews (VI,17–VII,14; VIII,5–IX,8 and X,19–22, 25–27, 29–31, 33–35), Romans, Galatians, First Corinthians, while the *scriptio superior* has part of an Arabic homily, i.e. the text of

connected with the second trade period, as it was donated to the Beuron monastery by Friedrich Grote-Hahn<sup>39</sup> from Leutkirch at the beginning of the twentieth century. Grote, who travelled in Egypt,<sup>40</sup> donated the leaf because of the monks' great experience in using the special photography of palimpsests to enhance their *scriptio inferior*. Moreover, Grote is the source of the Sinaitic Paris manuscripts, as described by Géhin.<sup>41</sup> Thus, for example, the Paris quaternion MS BnF arabe 6725, ff. 28–35 was in Grote's hands in 1919 – Margaret Dunlop Gibson saw the external bifolium in 1893 and 1895<sup>42</sup> and used it in her 1899 edition – but all of the four bifolia later came into Grote's possession.<sup>43</sup> After his death, Grote's collection was dispersed and its story became connected once more with Agnes Smith Lewis and her manuscripts, when Grote's widow, Käte Grote-Hahn, tried to sell a quire of a Syriac lectionary to Agnes, who had bought the lectionary codex in Cairo in 1895.<sup>44</sup>

The names of famous collectors of Sinaitic manuscripts, such as Friedrich Grote-Hahn and his widow Käte Grote-Hahn in Leutkirch, Karl W. Hiersemann

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John Chrysostom on humility (Graf, *Geschichte*, vol. 1, pp. 350–351). I had no access to the original eleven Beuron leaves, but the description given in Assfalg and Molitor perfectly matches the features of the Birmingham Armenian and Quranic fragments and the Cambridge codex. See Julius Assfalg and Joseph Molitor, *Armenische Handschriften* [= Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, 4], Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1962, pp. 114–116. These eleven leaves could be the last quire of the original codex of Christian Arabic homilies.

- 39 Friedrich Grote bought the two Beuron palimpsest fragments in Egypt in 1920; see Khalil Samir, "Un exemple des contacts culturels entre les églises syriaques et arabes: Jacques de Saroug dans la tradition arabe", in *III Symposium Syriacum 1980: Les contacts du monde syriaque avec les autres cultures*, ed. Ronald Taft, Tomas Spidlik and S. Swierkosz [= Orientalia Christiana analecta], Rome, Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1983, pp. 213–245, here p. 224 ("Fragment palimpseste de Beuron") and Vaccari, "Palinsesti biblici", p. 231. Vaccari indicates E. Grote rather than F. Grote, but this is probably a typographic error.
- 40 Paul Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaitiques dispersés 1: les fragments syriaques et arabes de Paris", *Oriens Christianus*, 90 (2006), pp. 23–43, here p. 28.
- 41 Géhin mentions the Paris quaternion MS BnF arabe 6725, ff. 28–35, which was in Grote's hands in 1919, *ibid.*, p. 30.
- 42 See the introduction in Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles from an Eighth or Ninth Century MS. in the Convent of St Catharine on Mount Sinai* [= Studia Sinaitica, vii], London, C.J. Clay and Sons, 1899.
- 43 Later, the leaves came into the possession of Walther Adam (1881–1964) and in 1990s they arrived in the Schøyen Collection, Oslo. See Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaitiques dispersés 11", pp. 12–13.
- 44 The manuscript mentioned in the letter is likely to be the manuscript edited by Agnes Smith Lewis, *A Palestinian Syriac Lectionary Containing Lessons from the Pentateuch, Job, Proverbs, Prophets, Acts, and Epistles* [= Studia Sinaitica, vi], London, C.J. Clay and Sons, 1897.

(1854–1928)<sup>45</sup> and Tischendorf in Leipzig, and Jacques Rosenthal (1854–1937)<sup>46</sup> in Munich, are connected with leaves bought and owned by Agnes Smith Lewis, as illustrated by Géhin. Moreover, some of these names are interestingly intertwined – perhaps by coincidence – in the story of the disappearance of the Lewis palimpsest codex in 1914.

## 2 Later Movements of the Lewis Codex: Its Disappearance and the Role of German Academics

The disappearance of the Lewis codex resembles a detective story condensed into a very short and enigmatic statement handwritten on the first page of the codex as it was rebound by Agnes Smith Lewis after she had disassembled the manuscript. The handwritten note is simply as follows:

This Ms was lent to an international exhibition of books & MSS at Leipzig in 1914. On the outbreak of the European War it disappeared. Its whereabouts were subsequently traced by Dr Oman, of Westminster College, Cambridge, aided by Prof Fr. v. Huene, of Tübingen, and in 1936 (April 20) the MS was returned to the library in accordance with the will of Mrs A S Lewis.<sup>47</sup>

The story behind this handwritten note has been partially traced through the unedited correspondence of Agnes Smith Lewis and John Oman (1860–1939), who was principal of Westminster College from 1922 to 1935.

**2.1 *Historical Facts and Construed Episodes in Lewis and Oman's Letters***  
Agnes Smith Lewis lent three manuscripts to be displayed at the *Internationale Ausstellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphik* in Leipzig, i.e. the Christian homilies

45 Hiersemann's collection was dispersed among private collectors, the University Library of Louvain and Arnold Mettler Specker or Arnold J. Mettler in St Gallen, Switzerland. See Jan Just Witkam, *Manuscripts Or. 14.001–Or. 15.000 Registered in Leiden University Library in the Period Between August 1973 and June 1980: Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden*, vol. 15, Leiden, Ter Lugt Press, 2006–2007, p. 95.

46 Rosenthal sold Sinaitic manuscripts to Achille Ratti at the Ambrosiana Library in 1910 and to the British Museum in 1914.

47 Already mentioned in Fedeli, "Mingana and the manuscript", p. 5. A short reference to the manuscript's disappearance is found in a letter of Mingana to Arthur Jeffery about the manuscript given into Brockelmann's care and never returned to England; see Fedeli, "Mingana Qur'anic manuscripts".

palimpsest with the Quranic text in its *scriptio inferior*, a Syriac lectionary<sup>48</sup> and a Syriac palimpsest.<sup>49</sup> Her contacts at the exhibition were Dr Schindler, Dr Weise<sup>50</sup> and Dr Stumme, while the scholar who should have supervised all of the stages of the borrowing and displaying of such important manuscripts was Carl Brockelmann.<sup>51</sup> The manuscripts were on display at least until 3 August 1914. On the outbreak of the war, on 12 August 1914, Agnes wrote a letter to Brockelmann and Stumme asking them to take the two Syriac manuscripts and her Quranic manuscript to Halle – the city which had given her a honorary PhD – and to keep them in the library there until the end of the war, but unfortunately these two letters were never posted.<sup>52</sup> It is worth noticing that this is one of the first mentions of the entire Lewis palimpsest codex – assembled by using several Syriac, Greek, Arabic Quranic and non-Quranic texts – as “the Quranic manuscript” (“meine Korân Handschrift”) by Agnes Lewis herself, despite the Quranic part representing only one third of the entire content of the *scriptio inferior* of the palimpsest. Thus, today, the Lewis codex is mainly known as the Quranic palimpsest.

The Quranic manuscript was entrusted to Caspar René Gregory of Leipzig between the outbreak of the war and 1917, when Gregory died.<sup>53</sup> His widow, Lucy Thayer Gregory, left Germany and returned to the United States, leaving the manuscript with her lawyer, Dr Friedrich Thiersch in Markgrafenstrasse in Leipzig. Only in February 1920 did she write to Agnes to say that she could arrange the manuscript’s return to Cambridge by contacting her lawyer. The matter was managed through the solicitors Gilmour & Christies, but Dr Thier-

48 The manuscript (i.e. the Syriac lectionary) mentioned in Käte Grote-Hahn’s letter was bequeathed to Westminster College.

49 The manuscript is the Codex Climaci Rescriptus of Westminster College, later sold at Sotheby’s and now part of the Collection of the Museum of the Bible (Washington, D.C.). See *Codex Climaci rescriptus: Fragments of sixth century Palestinian Syriac texts of the Gospels, of the Acts of the Apostles and of St Paul’s Epistles. Also fragments of an early Palestinian lectionary of the Old Testament, etc.*, transcribed and edited by Agnes Smith Lewis [= Horae Semiticae, VI11], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1909.

50 Letter of Dr Weise to Agnes Smith Lewis, Leipzig, 1 April 1914 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

51 See, for example, the letter of Dr Weise to Agnes Smith Lewis, Leipzig, 21 April 1914 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

52 See the letter of Agnes Smith Lewis to Carl Brockelmann and to Dr Stumme, Cambridge 12 August 1914 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

53 The widow wrote in 1920 that “a few years ago a manuscript belonging to you was entrusted to my husband.” See handwritten letter of Lucy Thayer Gregory to Agnes Smith Lewis, Cambridge, Mass., USA, 9 February 1920 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

sch was unable to send back the manuscript at that time. He tried to send the manuscript to England in July 1920,<sup>54</sup> but – according to him – it was forbidden to send artefacts out of the country.

If the manuscript was in Thiersch's hands in 1920, a letter of Käte Grote-Hahn in 1923 suggests that the three manuscripts lent to the Leipzig Exhibition were considered by contemporary scholars to have disappeared. In fact, she wrote to Agnes to offer her a quire of her disappeared Syriac lectionary.<sup>55</sup>

When Agnes died in 1926, her executor started all due actions for returning the palimpsest to Cambridge. Thus, John Oman of Westminster College and the solicitors Gilmore & Christie from Irvine in Scotland wrote to the lawyer employed by Gregory's widow to request information about "a manuscript which is in your possession and which you had found it impossible at that time to return". John Oman also wrote to Brockelmann, who at first denied any knowledge about such a matter. Oman's reply expresses his indignation:

if we are right, you will see at once that we cannot accept your repudiation of your responsibility, and that we have at least a right to expect you to give us every assistance in your power in recovering the MSS.

He added: "apart from all responsibility, I should have expected a little more help from an Oriental scholar, in recovering Oriental MSS."<sup>56</sup>

All of Oman's efforts from 1926 until at least 1928, as far as the available letters suggest, were in vain. Thus, he wrote to Albert Schramm, the director of the German Museum of Books and Writing (Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum) in Leipzig and Stumme, with whom Agnes had been in contact to arrange the borrowing of her manuscripts before the 1914 exhibition. Moreover, through Maggs Brothers of London, he was in contact with Karl W. Hierse-

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54 Handwritten letter of Th. Thiersch to Gilmore & Christies, Leipzig, 20 October 1920 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

55 Käte Grote-Hahn wrote: "I have the quire of your Lectionary which has disappeared and I wish to know if you are interested in it and if you would buy it and at which price." See handwritten letter of Käte Grote-Hahn to Agnes Smith Lewis, Berlin, 6 March 1923 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5). Actually, the Syriac lectionary had returned to Cambridge by January 1923. In fact, Islay Ferrier Burns, librarian of Westminster College from 1901 to 1924, wrote a letter to Professor Burkitt, dated January 1923, confirming that the Palestinian Syriac lectionary has been returned from the Leipzig Exhibition to Castle Brae, which was the name of the sisters' house. See correspondence of Westminster College, Cambridge, WGL5/6/5. I thank Helen Weller for her great help in providing me with this reference.

56 Typed letter of John Oman to Carl Brockelmann, [Cambridge], 19 October 192 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

mann, the Leipzig manuscript collector mentioned above. Lastly, he asked for help from Stephen Gaselee at the Foreign Office in London and Hugh Casseles, the consul in Leipzig. Nevertheless, the Quranic manuscript remained missing and did not return to Cambridge immediately after Lewis' death in 1926.

It was found ten years later when Richard Brandt (1910–1997), the American philosopher, at that time a young student at Cambridge, went to study in Germany in the years 1935–1936 before going to Yale for his PhD studies. Being *in loco*, he was able to gain the help of Professor Paul Kahle (1875–1964), at that time based in Bonn, Professor Huene and Dr. Bockwitz. Circular letters were sent to all the institutions which could have heard about Agnes' manuscript. Huene's cooperation<sup>57</sup> was essential in finding the manuscript in Leipzig. In April 1936 it was conveyed from Leipzig to Berlin by hand,<sup>58</sup> and then from Berlin it went to Cambridge, where it has been since 20 April 1936.

If this is the still incomplete picture of the facts around the manuscript's disappearance after the 1914 exhibition and its discovery in Leipzig itself in 1936, as the mention of the transport from that city unequivocally implies, the letters record a series of construed episodes and recriminations among German scholars. According to John Oman's successor, "V.I.P.s in German academia disclaimed knowledge!"<sup>59</sup>

## 2.2 *Berlin, Leipzig or Halle: Did the Manuscript Disappear?*

There are no reasons for doubting the genuineness of Lucy Thayer Gregory's letter to Agnes in 1920 and the fact that she left the manuscript with her lawyer in Leipzig. However, the manuscript is represented as disappeared during the war, as, for example, in the above-mentioned letters by Käte Grote-Hahn<sup>60</sup>

57 Typed letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 29 April 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5): "it is very decent indeed of Prof. von Huene, to go to all this trouble; it certainly looks as if he would do his best to recover it. He has taken the matter to heart, and thinks it a matter of national honour, that the Mss. be restored!"

58 In the typed and signed letter of Stephen Gaselee to John Oman, Foreign Office of London, 17 April 1936 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5), Gaselee asked for the expenses of the manuscript's transport from Leipzig to Berlin to be reimbursed.

59 William Alexander Leslie Elmslie, principal of Westminster College after John Oman, said this in summarising the facts about the disappearance of the manuscripts. Handwritten letter of Elmslie to Roy, 15 June 1957 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

60 See typed letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, 28 May 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5): "We are also trying to find out from Mrs. Capt.

and Schramm.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, rumours circulated about the possibility that an Englishman could have tried to remove something or that two Turks had stolen the manuscript during the 1914 exhibition, corresponding to the hypothesis that “a Muslim who may have seen it exhibited in Leipzig got hold of it and destroyed it,” as mentioned by Mingana in his letter to Arthur Jeffery.<sup>62</sup> Police and scholars investigated the possible theft years later, in 1935.<sup>63</sup> According to Schramm, Mrs Lewis’ manuscripts were never on display during the exhibition “because there was no place for them”, thus Dr Weise “laid the manuscripts aside somewhere else”<sup>64</sup> without making a list of all the manuscripts in his section. When the war broke out, the rooms for displaying the artefacts were evacuated and used as a military hospital, with inevitable confusion involved in putting them in a deposit.<sup>65</sup>

The letters also tell of reciprocal suspicions and accusations. Thus, Stumme gave information to Oman and Brandt pretending not to know Schramm, whereas they were, in fact, very close friends.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, the collector Hiersemann wrote to Maggs Bros in Paris in 1927 informing them that “Dr Ernst Kuhnert, Director of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek at Berlin (NW7, Unter den Linden 38), has, I am told now, in his hands the whole material respecting those three manuscripts.”<sup>67</sup> Hiersemann, who died in 1928, was unable to go further

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Grothe-Hahn, who still lives at the address mentioned on the postcard, how it came to be known that Mrs Lewis had lost any MSS at all.”

- 61 Typed and signed letter of Schramm to John Oman, Leipzig, 15 March 1927 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5): “Über die von Ihnen vermissten Handschriften kann ich Ihnen nichts mitteilen.”
- 62 Already mentioned in Fedeli, “Digitization project”, p. 103.
- 63 Typed and signed letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 28 May 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).
- 64 Details reported in the typed and signed letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 8 February 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).
- 65 Typed and handwritten letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 8 February 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).
- 66 Brandt wrote that “Schramm and Stumme who are very close friends” and “Prof. Kahle also writes that he has no confidence in Stumme”; see typed and signed letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 28 May 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5). Oman replied: “You rather astonish me, however, in saying that he [i.e. Stumme] and Schramm are friends, for more than once he says in effect that Schramm is a most objectionable person with whom he could not get on at all. I know Kahle and I would believe him against a dozen Schramms.” See typed letter of John Oman to Richard Brandt, Cambridge, 31 May 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).
- 67 Typed letter of Karl W. Hiersemann to Maggs Bros, Leipzig, 1 April 1927 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

in investigating that matter and give further details about Ernst Kuhnert and the manuscripts supposed to be in Berlin. There is no evidence that seems to point to a Berlin location apart from Hiersemann's suspicion, which he is simply reporting ("I am told now"). The manuscripts' movement to Halle seems to be another false track:

Prof. Stumme's first recollection was that he had heard that the MSS had been conveyed to the library of the Oriental Society in Halle. Dr. Printz, the present librarian made inquiries, but so far he has not been able to find any trace of them nor to find anyone who knows about them being received.

Interestingly, as the previous accusation about Halle's responsibility proved to be false, Stumme "recollected that Prof. Schramm asked him if he would house the MSS, but at that time he had a rather ingenious theft committed in his house and he was afraid to undertake the responsibility".<sup>68</sup>

More probable seem to be the details reported by Kahle. Brandt wrote to Oman:

when he [Kahle] was in the Leipzig Museum (of which Schramm was head) in 1921, he saw one of the smaller manuscripts in a showcase. It was Sunday, and no one at the management was there, but he pointed out to one of the porters that the MS belonged to Mrs Lewis, and should be sent back. It was only sometime later – after the collection had been moved to another building – that he came back and conducted a systematic search for it. But it had disappeared completely. Schramm, tho he was head of the Museum, declares absolute ignorance of the fact, or that Kahle was ever there at all.

However, John Oman's correspondence mentions only indirectly where the manuscript was found, as it was conveyed from Leipzig to Berlin, but the letters do not indicate explicitly who possessed the manuscript after it was entrusted to Caspar René Gregory, then his widow and then her lawyer before 1920. The unknown private hands were able to avoid returning the manuscript to Mrs Lewis and her executors from 1914 to 1935/36.<sup>69</sup> The manuscript was found

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68 See the above-mentioned attachment to Oman's reply to Brandt, 31 May 1935, with a summary of the case of the disappearance that Oman wrote in 1927.

69 It is likely that the three manuscripts had different fates. The Codex Climaci and the Palestinian lectionary probably returned to Westminster College, Cambridge before the

when the case came into the public domain, circular letters were sent to any possible institution, the British consulate in Leipzig and the Foreign Office in London were involved and when it was evident that the manuscript was not Mrs Lewis' possession, but had been bequeathed to Cambridge University Library.<sup>70</sup> Just at that time, the manuscript was found.

### 3 Politics and the Public Image of Manuscripts

The disappearance of the Lewis codex caused controversy about its authenticity, while the person(s) who decided to keep it in Leipzig did not care about its ownership or scholarly access to it. The story of this manuscript should prompt questions about trading, possessing and accessing manuscripts.<sup>71</sup> The politics of early Quranic manuscripts and access to such objects was crucial in a delicate period such as the beginning of the twentieth century, when textual criticism applied to the Quranic text was a new field of research. This is likely to be the reason why the codex became known as the Quranic palimpsest. The results of the politics behind the Lewis codex were – as regards the Birmingham-Mingana fragments – that MS Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 150 was also hid-

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Quranic palimpsest did. In fact, the Library Committee section of the Report of the Westminster College Committee to the General Assembly in 1927 expressed gratitude for Mrs Lewis's donation, mentioning that "Along with the books we received a number of curios, ornaments, MSS and papyrus fragments. These are being sorted and examined, and will be catalogued and deposited in secure places in the College." *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England, Held in Trinity Church, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Days of May, 1927, Together with the Minutes of the Executive Commission of Assembly, the Reports of the Assembly's Committees, and Other Papers Received by the Court*, London, The Offices of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1927, p. 962. The wording of the report would imply that manuscripts and books had been physically received into the collections at Westminster in 1927. I thank Helen Weller for providing me with this reference. From Islay F. Burns' letter to Professor Burkitt, mentioned above, we know that the Palestinian Syriac lectionary has been returned from the Leipzig Exhibition to Mrs Lewis in 1923 or earlier.

70 Interestingly, Brandt refers to the fact that "He [Schramm] would also like to know who the present legitimate owner of the MSS. is." See typed and handwritten letter of Richard Brandt to John Oman, Tübingen, 8 February 1935 (correspondence held at Westminster College, Cambridge, WT5).

71 Regarding access to manuscripts, contrasting policies are adopted by different institutions. The research project on the Quranic leaves of the Lewis codex is an example of cooperation between the Cambridge University Library and scholars, and the library's policy in favour of open access. See the website of the Lewis palimpsest displaying and sharing the research results (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/minganalewis>).

den and forgotten because of its Tischendorf provenance: it is still referred to in a catalogue as an unknown text of unknown provenance,<sup>72</sup> while the possible connection of MS Mingana Christian Arabic Add. 124 and 171 with the entire codex remains unexplored. On the other hand, as regards the Cambridge-Lewis codex, it was hidden as a private possession from 1914 to 1936, so that scholars thought that it was missing, destroyed or invented. Its 1914 edition – done by Alphonse Mingana and Agnes Smith Lewis – replaced the artefact itself and for decades the manuscript was received as the Mingana-Lewis palimpsest by pointing to its Quranic part rather than the Cambridge palimpsest CUL Or. 1287.

The reception of manuscripts, their history and their texts is not only a cultural affair: they also have economic, diplomatic and political implications that are often hidden in the public image that manuscripts reflect. This is the case with the Mingana fragment, which was brought from Sinai to Europe, probably in 1853, kept in unknown private hands until 1936, wanted by all manuscript collectors at the beginning of the 20th century, purchased by Mingana through an antiquarian dealer in 1936 and hidden through its incorrect catalogue entry from 1936 to 2011. A contemporary example of the complexity of the reception of Quranic manuscripts, their history and studies is the so-called Birmingham Quran and its reception after an announcement made by the BBC in July 2015.<sup>73</sup> Following the supposed discovery of the oldest Quranic manuscript, newspapers and other media reported the results of the radiocarbon analyses of the Birmingham Quran all over the world. Internet users echoed the news in an unprecedented and uncontrolled way by means of the digital revolution, although the intricate and sometime contrasting information given in the media and on blogs recalls the situation that emerges from the private image of Quranic manuscripts at the beginning of the last century. The analysis of this Birmingham Quran appears to have been divorced from the artefact itself and become a tool of the media.

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72 Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. III, pp. 19–20 and p. xxv.

73 See the announcement, slightly different from the original version, in Sean Coughlan, “‘Oldest’ Koran fragments found in Birmingham University”, BBC News, 22 July 2015, available online at <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-33436021>.

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# Manuscript Ownership and Readership at the American University of Beirut at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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## 1 Introduction

The Libraries of the American University of Beirut (AUB) house an important collection of roughly 1,400 manuscripts, most of which are in Arabic. The core of the collection – around 583 items in total – was acquired by the Syrian Protestant College (SPC), as the AUB was originally known, between 1866 and the 1920s, through the donation or purchase of three collections. As is suggested by the library records (university catalogues, accession ledger books, etc.), these acquisitions were made with the main aim of providing curricular and scholarly support to the SPC community during an era preceding and concurrent with the publishing boom in the Middle East. In this paper, we attempt to describe these three sub-collections, as well as some of the uses to which the manuscripts were put. We also begin to chart a few continuous and subtle traces and indicators of changes towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, in terms of readership, ownership and “consumption” of these manuscripts, in an era in which scribal and print practices coexisted.

Our main hypothesis with regard to the latter is that such an investigation, when carried out thoroughly, will reveal a significant overlap and a nuanced give-and-take between scribal and print cultures during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The wider conclusion we hope to draw from these observations is that some qualifications need to be made to the oft-told story of the large-scale, uniform and unilinear impact of the Arab press and of printing in general, on ideas of “civilization”, *tamaddun*, “progress”, *taṭawwur*, and on the thinking and history of ideas that shaped the *Nahḍa* (as the period was known) and its thinkers. We suspect that scribal practices were in fact by no means altogether marginalised and ineffective, and that the formation, design and production of the printed book as well as of the intellectual discourse of the *Nahḍa*, especially around pedagogical ideas and models, knowledge production and consumption, was not completely severed from the long heritage of Arab and Islamic scribal practices.

### 1.1 *A Brief Historical Background*

It may be worth noting for those not familiar with the history of the University that the SPC was founded in 1866, largely as a result of the efforts of members of the Syria Mission,<sup>1</sup> in order to cater to a young generation of Levantines. Beginning with a mere sixteen students, and a location in rented quarters, the College grew rapidly: within ten years of its establishment, the number of enrolled students had already reached 100, and by the turn of the century, the College could boast over a dozen of its own buildings, around forty teachers, and a walled campus in a distinguished location of Beirut, on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup>

From the outset, the College was strongly committed to teaching science, to the spread and revival of the Arabic language and to building strong libraries:<sup>3</sup> it influenced and was in turn influenced by the local elite, who aided, supported and often spearheaded efforts to translate and publish works in Arabic.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, book culture and readership in general flourished in the region. In addition to founding seminaries and a college, early missionaries in the Syria Mission had founded a printing press in Malta in 1822; this was then moved, with great difficulty, to Beirut in 1834.<sup>5</sup> The American Press (al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīrkāniyya), as it was called, operated from 1834 to 1964, along with many others in the country (e.g. Maṭbaʿat Dayr al-Qiddīs Yūḥannā al-Ṣāyiḡ, 1728, then 1871–1939; Maṭbaʿat al-Ābāʾ al-Yasūʿiyyīn, 1848; al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāṭūlikiyya, 1848; Dar Sader, 1863–present).<sup>6</sup> Perhaps one of the biggest contributions of

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- 1 The Syria mission was a Presbyterian mission sent to the Middle East by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1820.
  - 2 Syrian Protestant College, *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Syrian Protestant College*, Beirut, American University of Beirut, 1963.
  - 3 S.B.L. Penrose, *That They May Have Life: The Story of the American University of Beirut 1866–1941*, New York, Trustees of the American University of Beirut, 1941.
  - 4 Most noteworthy of such efforts was perhaps Muʿallim Buṭrus al-Bustānī's monumental Encyclopedia, *Dāʾirat al-maʿārif*. In addition, several Arab intellectuals aided in these efforts and helped the Missionaries acquire Arabic books and manuscripts, build libraries, and found and participate in reading circles. Some of the most noteworthy Arab intellectuals who aided in these various efforts include, among others, Sheikh Yūsuf al-Asīr (1815–1889), who exerted monumental efforts in helping Van Dyck translate the Bible into Arabic; Jirji Zaydan (1861–1914), who was very active in academic and various press circles; Sheikh Ibrāhīm al-Ḥūrānī (1844–1916), who was a poet, educator and author of many books on astronomy, Arabic and Darwinism; Asad Rustum (1897–1965), who was familiar with the Ottoman archives and with the manuscript world throughout the Arab world in general, and who helped advise on building the SPC library at the turn of the twentieth century.
  - 5 American Press, AUB Archives, AA: 7.1. Box1, File1, "Introduction: Information, publicity & history of the American Press".
  - 6 *Fī Bayrūt ... wa-maḍat fikra*, Beirut, Dār Ṣādir, 2014.

the American Press, besides printing some religious and scientific educational books, was the design of a simple, easy-to-read Arabic font,<sup>7</sup> a kind of modern Helvetica, which was then adopted by several other printing houses in the region.

The rapid expansion of printing – and with it, bookselling, and book and newspaper readership in general – went hand in hand with other intellectual developments, such as the establishment of reading clubs and rooms, colleges, schools, presses and literary societies, as well as magazines, newspapers and journals with regular book review sections, e.g. *al-Muqtaṭaf* and *al-Hilāl*, to mention just two out of many. Learned societies such as the Syrian Society for the Acquisition of Arts and Sciences (Beirut, 1847) organised regular lectures and meetings, and published regular proceedings, all of which encouraged readership and public intellectual discourse, and an interest in the written word in general.<sup>8</sup> The missionaries themselves attest to this in their reports more than once. In its Annual Report of 1868, the Syrian Mission wrote: “The demand for books in Syria is constantly increasing.” Similarly, in its Annual Report from the same year, the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions wrote: “The cry comes from Egypt and Palestine, from Assyria and North Africa, and even from Peking, the capital of China, ‘Give us Arabic books!’”<sup>9</sup>

It was against this rich intellectual and rapidly changing and dynamic background that the acquisition of the manuscript collections by the SPC, which we will describe shortly, took place.

But prior to offering a description of the three manuscript sub-collections of SPC and the uses to which they have been put, we would like to touch on two general considerations that, in our view, give credence to the hypothesis that the intellectual developments in the region characterised under the rubric *al-Nahḍa* should be understood as continuous with and importantly influenced by centuries-old scribal practices and readership, production and teaching practices based on manuscripts. What we have in mind here are the following points:

7 American Press, AUB Archives, AA:7.1. Box1, File1, “Introduction: Information, publicity & history of the American Press”.

8 Yūsuf Quzmā Ḥūrī, *al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-‘arabiyya al-mawǧūda fī Maktabat al-Ġāmi‘a al-Amīrkiyya*, Beirut, al-Ġāmi‘a al-Amīrkiyya fī Bayrūt, 1985.

9 Marwa Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism in Late Ottoman Beirut”, *Past & Present*, 196 (2007), pp. 173–214.

- I. Many of the manuscripts were purchased or produced at SPC with the express purpose of classroom use. There are two aspects to this:
- a) SPC faculty and members of the Syria Mission often wrote in and translated into Arabic, but also transcribed (or had students copy) and used manuscripts in their teaching. So, for example, prominent SPC faculty and community members, such as Harvey Porter (1844–1923), Cornelius Van Dyck (1818–1895), George Edward Post (1838–1909), John Wortabet (1827–1908), Ibrāhīm al-Ḥūrānī (1844–1916) and Asʿad Šudūdī (1826–1906), purchased, owned or authored manuscripts, which they subsequently donated to the College's library. Some of these manuscripts were transcribed/copied by the authors themselves or by their students, such as in the case of Franšīs Šamʿūn, a student of Cornelius Van Dyck at the American Seminary in Abeih. He transcribed, in 1848, many of Van Dyck's books – six of these we know were donated to AUB by Šamʿūn's son, Dr Salīm Šamʿūn. Many of the manuscripts produced or copied by the SPC community were used in the curriculum, particularly in the areas of medicine and science, where it seems that there was a dearth of published material in Arabic. Interesting examples in this regard are Post's *Dictionary of Plants and Animals* (MS:581.03:P85qA, copied in 1903) and Asʿad Šudūdī's *al-Falsafa al-ṭabīʿiyya* (MS 530.01: S562fA), which was copied by Šudūdī's student Asʿad Ḥayrallāh, both of which were included in the syllabus of a Science Class, Course 214, which was offered some time in the late 1890s at SPC.<sup>10</sup> Another notable example is Van Dyck's *General Pathology*, or *al-Patulūǧiyya al-ʿumūmiyya* (MS 616:V24pA), which was copied or authored in 1867 by Van Dyck himself and was the main component of Van Dyck's famous pathology course, which attracted many students to SPC.<sup>11</sup> As these examples suggest (and as contemporary library ledger books in the AUB library archives confirm), many of the manuscripts we are about to describe were acquired for the specific purpose of inclusion in a curriculum, and often in a specific course.
  - b) The SPC was affiliated with the American Press, and many of the manuscripts that were used in the curriculum could have been printed. But they were not and were included (or bought in man-

<sup>10</sup> Jafet Memorial Library, AUB Archives, AA:2.7.10.1. Accession Records. Box 1, Book 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

uscript form to be included) in course reading lists at the College in their manuscript form.<sup>12</sup> We can only conjecture as to the reason why this was the case. Were funds directed towards religious books to spread the Protestant faith, rather than to support the SPC's "scientific" curriculum? But the fact remains that the Press did not publish many of these manuscripts. The result was that they acquainted students and faculty members with these works in their scribal form.

- II. The second overarching consideration is that scribal practices and manuscripts constitute one of the many aspects of material culture in which we find an organic unity of form and content. The Hegelian motto that "form is content or content is form", or Marshal McLuhan's famous dictum that "the medium is the message"<sup>13</sup> is a worthy presentation to what was going on in the scholarly arena during the 19th century. The broad idea is that the formation, design and use of an object, in this case a manuscript, is very much affected by its function – the function affects the form. Our meaning can be illustrated with some examples.

It is no secret that the very design of a manuscript, from determining layout (the *mistara*, the page layout or design) prior to copying, to the style of copying (plain, illuminated, with margins or without, two columns vs. one, etc.) was very much determined by the function the manuscript was intended to be put to. For example, a *šarḥ* (commentary) work would have a space for the inner text, i.e. the *matn* or *ašl*, but in the outer spaces there would be enough room to allow for a commentary and notes. A poetry manuscript, especially in the Persian tradition, could have two columns, and often a space for decoration, illumination, and so on. A manuscript intended for study has obviously a different function and consequently a simpler look and layout than a manuscript intended for, say, aesthetic meditation or veneration.

The organic unity between object and usage, form and content that characterises manuscript production in the Arab and Islamic world in general, across centuries and geographic locations, was also part and parcel of the Islamic tradition of learning, and of the use these manuscripts were put to, in terms both of their production and consumption. It is worth noting, for example, that the

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12 Many acquisition ledger books kept in the university archives indicate the title of the manuscript, the purpose of the purchase (including for a specific course), in addition to the date of acquisition, and the price. Jafet Memorial Library, AUB Archives, AA:2.7.10.1. Accession Records, Box 1. Book 1 & 2.

13 Marshal McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964, p. 7.

concept of *ittibā'* (fellowship) – to follow George Makdisi's account of the rise of institutions of learning<sup>14</sup> – and the concept of modelling (*muṣāḥaba*) between teacher and student are at the core of the classical Islamic learning process: in this context, putting a master's words to pen and paper are essential to the learning process, besides memorisation (*mudākara*) and understanding. Copying a master's work,<sup>15</sup> or the work of a student of a master for that matter, can get one as close as possible to the thought, the teachings and way of being of a master.<sup>16</sup>

The readership, copying, ownership, creation and consumption of manuscripts in general had until the late nineteenth century functioned within small circles where the personal element was still very much a binding force, and where manuscripts were either produced for personal use or for teaching in small circles. The practice was now being transposed to a context where learning was much more institutionalised and “modernised”, undermining many of the contextual binding forces, connections and unities that had traditionally constituted the learning process. How were the rules of studying, handling, copying and “consuming” manuscripts transposed to a modern context where new pedagogical rules seemed to apply? How did these manuscripts fare within an institutional academic setting such as SPC? In our view, these are questions worth examining through the lens of the transitions afforded by the interplay between scribal and print practices that we witness in the acquisition and usage of these manuscript collections at SPC. We can here only begin to chart some of these questions and explorations.

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14 George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1981, p. 114.

15 Ibid.

16 The act of transcribing itself is therefore not only part and parcel of the process of learning, which involves a skill, a modelling after the teacher's way, but is also a vector, a medium that helps to embody, reinforce and propel the act of learning. It is therefore, in our view, worth looking into how these scribal practices were transposed from some of their centuries-old contexts to a modern institutionalised pedagogical one. These practices allowed for and reinforced a unity between function and form, and form and content at the level of the material object, namely the manuscript, as well at the level of the learning relation between pupil and teacher, establishing a special learning relation beyond a mere functional acquisition of information, moving to a more contextual and fine-grained manner of seeing and understanding specific aspects of the world, and specific ways of being in the world.

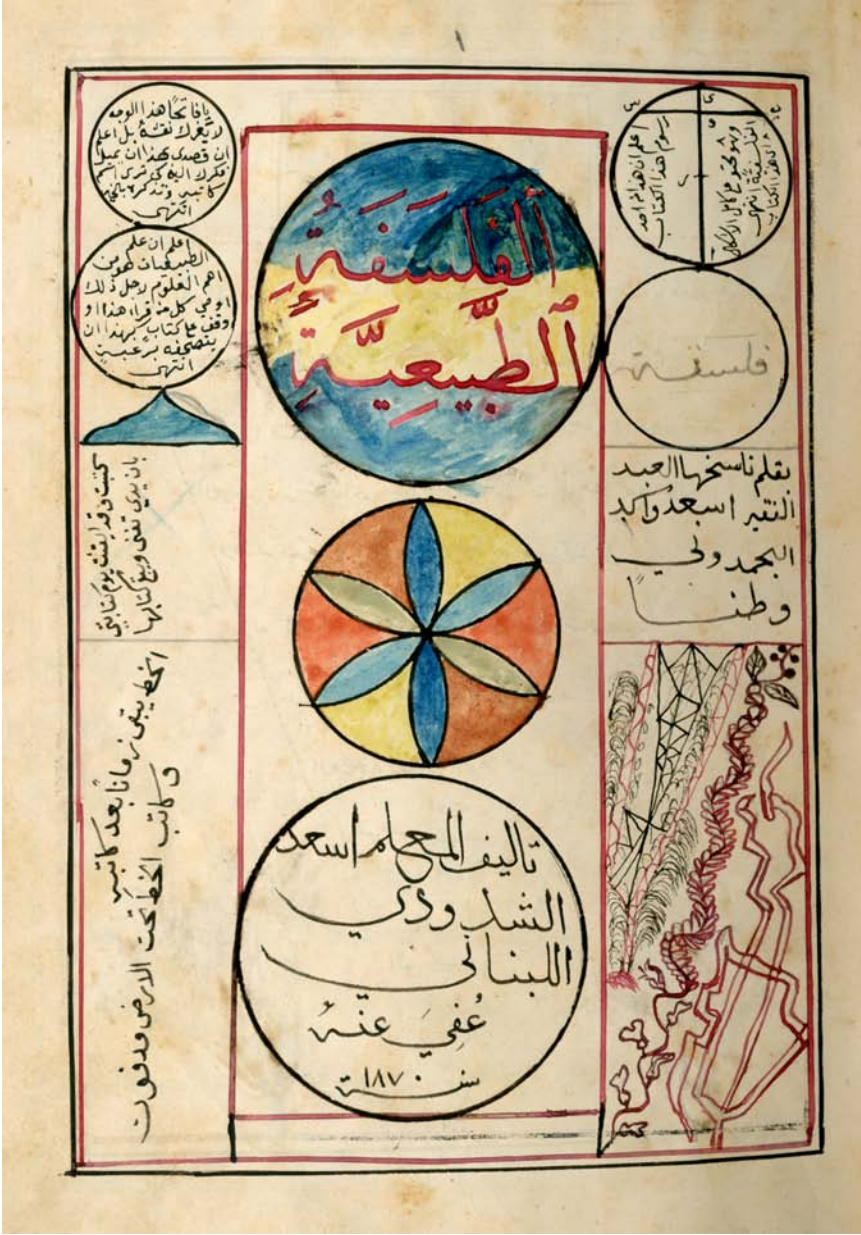


FIGURE 13.1A al-mu'allim As'ad al-Šudūdi al-Lubnānī, *al-Falsafa al-ṭabī'iyya*  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 530.01:S562FA



FIGURE 13.1B al-mu'allim As'ad al-Šudūdi al-Lubnānī, *al-Falsafa al-ṭabī'iyya*, 1870  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
MS 530.01:S562FA



FIGURE 13.2A Atīr al-Dīn al-Abharī, *Šarḥ al-Hidāya*, ca. 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 160:1942SA

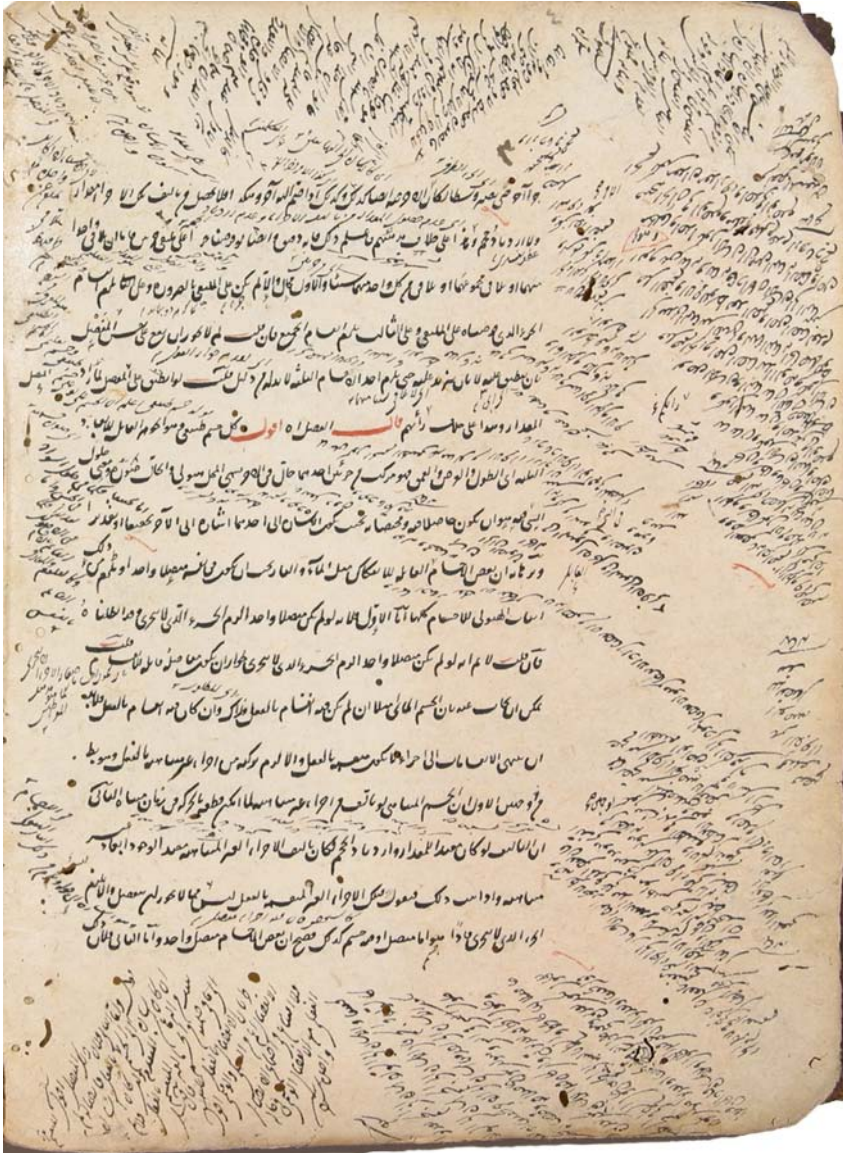


FIGURE 13.2B Atīr al-Dīn al-Abharī, *Sharḥ al-Hidāya*, ca 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 160:1942SA

## 2 Nawfal Ni‘matallāh Nawfal’s Collection

The earliest core acquisition of manuscripts at SPC came from the library of Nawfal Ni‘matallāh Nawfal (1812–1888).<sup>17</sup> Born in Tripoli in 1812 into a wealthy family, Nawfal started his studies under his father before travelling to Egypt to pursue his education and be trained as a scribe in the Egyptian administration. There, he learned Arabic, French and Italian and was also well versed in Ottoman Turkish, English and Persian. Nawfal returned from Egypt to Tripoli in 1828, and moved between Beirut and Tripoli, working as an interpreter for the Prussian and American Consulates and serving in the Tripoli *Treasury and Customs Administrative Unit*. In 1863, Nawfal resigned from his posts due to health problems and spent the rest of his life immersed in the study of manuscripts, in translation activities, mostly from Turkish into Arabic,<sup>18</sup> as well as in the writing and publishing of several books and articles in major newspapers of the time, e.g. *Lisān al-ḥāl* and *al-Ġinān*. From his youth, Nawfal had a passion for collecting manuscripts: he owned a vast library, mostly amassed throughout his travels and appointments in the Ottoman administration. Most of the manuscripts included in the collection that was bequeathed to SPC were purchased in Egypt, Lebanon and Istanbul, while a few others were copied by Nawfal himself. Examples of the latter include *Nawāl al-ṭalab fī šarḥ amṭāl al-‘arab* (MS 398.9:Sa12naA) by Ġibrā‘il Ibn Wahbatallāh Ṣadaqa, better known as Ġibrā‘il Ṣadaqa (1803–1874), copied in 1845; *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* by Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī (AH 303/915 or 916–AH 354/965), copied in 1845; *Kašf al-liṭām ‘an muḥayyā al-ḥukūma wa-l-aḥkām fī iqlīmā Mišr wa-barr al-Šām* (MS 956:N32kA), by Nawfal himself, copied in 1883.

These examples show that Nawfal was not only interested in owning manuscripts, but that he himself tried to perfect his skill as a scribe. Nawfal’s love for manuscripts seems to have been inherited from his father, indicating yet again a continuity in a relation to the scribal written word across generations: a close look at one of the manuscripts in the collection, *Bulūġ al-‘arab fī ‘ilm al-*

17 Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur, 2. Supplementband*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1937, p. 779; Ḥayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām: Qāmūs tarāġim li-ašar al-riġāl wa-l-nisā’ min al-‘arab wa-l-musta‘ribīn wa-l-mustašriqīn*, 8 vols., Beirut, Dār al-‘Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002, vol. VIII, p. 55; Johann Büssow and Khaled Safi, *Damascus Affairs: Egyptian Rule in Syria Through the Eyes of an Anonymous Damascene Chronicler, 1831–1841*, translation and parallel edition of two manuscripts [= Kultur, Recht und Politik in muslimischen Gesellschaften; volume xxvi], Würzburg, Ergon, 2013, p. 163.

18 *A‘lām fī dākirat Lubnān*, Beirut, al-Ġumhūriyya al-Lubnāniyya, Ri‘āsat Maġlis al-Wuzarā’, Mu‘assasat al-Maḥfūzāt al-Waṭaniyya, 2001, p. 28.

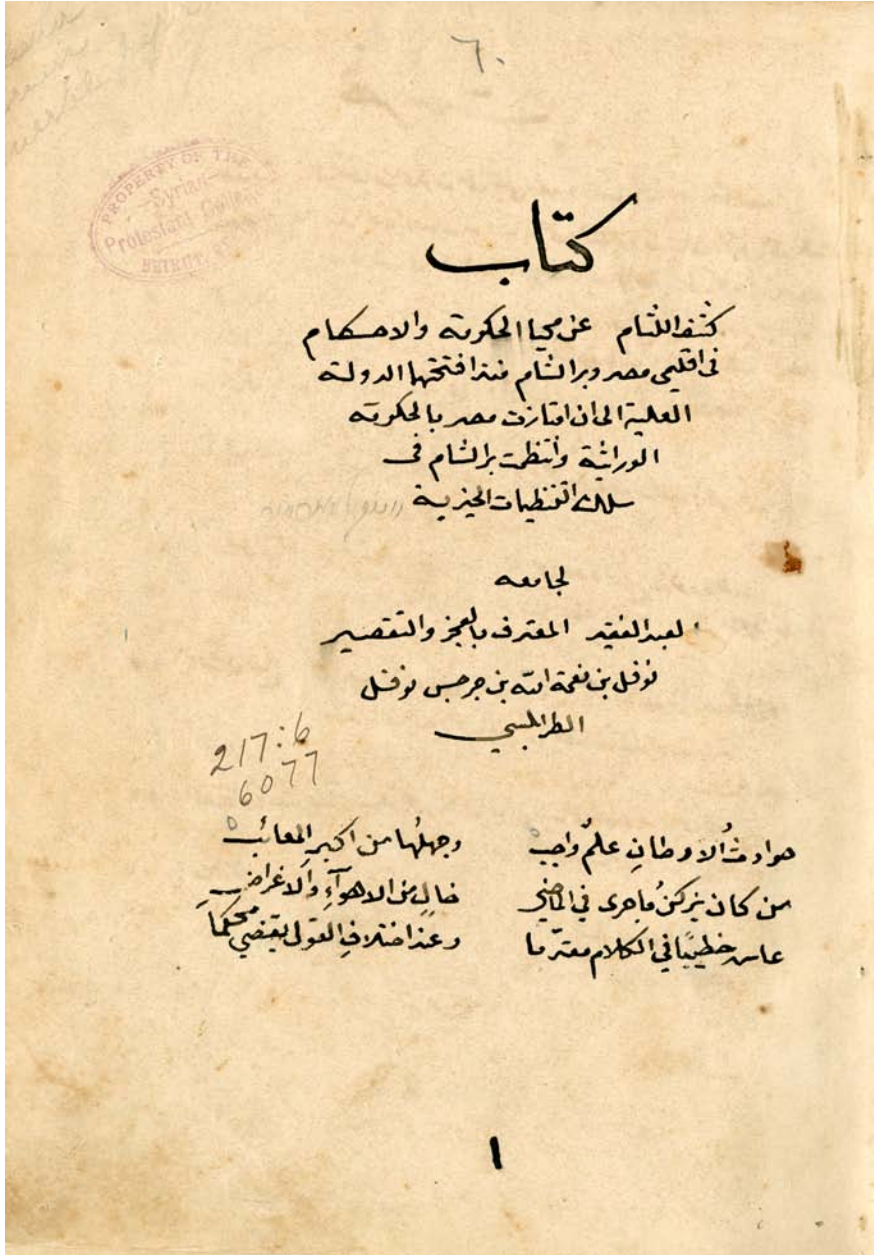


FIGURE 13.3 Nawfal Ni'matallah Nawfal, *Kaṣf al-liṭām ‘an muḥayyā al-ḥukūma wa-l-aḥkām fi iqlīmay Miṣr wa-barr al-Šām*, 1883  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 956:N32KA

*adab* (MS 808.04927:F223bA) by Abū al-Mawāhib Ya‘qūb ibn Ni‘matallāh ibn al-Ġayṭ al-Dibṣī, pre-AH 1188/1774, shows that Nawfal’s father, Ni‘matallāh Nawfal, bought this manuscript in Egypt in 1823, when Nawfal was just eleven years old. Nawfal himself also bought one manuscript we know of at such an early age. The manuscript is entitled *Mawā‘iz* (MS 252:N25mA), by Mu‘ad Ecnomus Našū (no date), and bears an ownership mark in Nawfal’s own handwriting dated 30 March 1826, when he was only fourteen. The manuscript contains a *ritā’* (eulogy) poem by Nāṣif al-Yāziġī (1800–1871), to be engraved on the tombstone of Nawfal’s father, hinting yet again at the shared love father and son had for the written word.

Nawfal’s vast library of printed books, along with twenty-three manuscripts, was donated by him before his death in 1888 to the SPC. Seventeen manuscripts from the Nawfal Collection feature their owner’s name as well as a bookplate reading “Presented to the Library of the SPC by Nawfal”. The motivation for the donation is not entirely clear to us, but we can only assume that most probably a close connection between Nawfal and the Syria Mission and to the Syrian Society for the Acquisition of Arts and Sciences (of which Nawfal was an active member) may have played a key role in motivating this deposit with the College, both societies having had a close relation with the SPC.

In general, the Nawfal Collection covers a wide range of subjects, ranging from history (5 MS), Arabic literature (3 MS), Turkish–Arabic and Turkish–Persian dictionaries (4 MS), Islam and ethics (4 MS), theology (2 MS), mathematics and measurements (1 MS), to astronomy (1 MS) and logic (1 MS). The library contains some Christian texts (sermons, theology, prayers, etc.) as well as some Turkish and Persian works, reflecting Nawfal’s interests and career, as well as his mastery of Turkish and Persian; for example, there is a Turkish–Persian dictionary, a volume on Turkish poetry, and his own work on the proper Arabisation of Turkish terms. In fact, the collection is a perfect witness to the convergence of Nawfal’s professional life, talents, wide travels and personal scholarly interests. Nawfal’s collection shows an eclectic taste and a multi-varied provenance as well as a sustained attempt at collecting manuscripts – it reveals him to be an educated and multi-lingual scribe, one who shows a clear cosmopolitan Ottoman bent, but also a strong interest in the local culture and social mores and ideas surrounding him. Perhaps one of the most interesting manuscripts in this collection is a social history of Mount Lebanon authored or copied in the nineteenth century by Nāṣif al-Yāziġī (1800–1871), entitled *Fī taqṣīm Ġabal Lubnān wa-ḥālat al-ḥukkām fihi wa-l-‘awā‘id wa-l-adyān allatī tūġad fihi* (MS 956.92:Y35fA).

This late nineteenth-century work lists the main dynasties present in Mount Lebanon and discusses their customs, religions and social mores. Interestingly,

the manuscript contains on the flyleaf an announcement for a book published in Jerusalem, stating: "اطلب كتاب أرنولد اليوناني طبعة القدس: 1885".<sup>19</sup> Manuscript lovers could thus share their common interests and love for the written word across countries, times, and scribal as well as print mediums.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Nawfal's library includes some noteworthy Islamic texts. We find, for example, the classical anthology *Subwān al-mutā' fi 'udwān al-atbā'* (MS 179:113sA:c.1) by Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Zafar (AH 497/1104–AH 565/1169) in a seventeenth-century Ottoman-era manuscript. This text on Islamic ethics and the Islamic code of conduct for princes bears witness to the breadth and depth of the intellectual formation of most Arab intellectuals in the Levant at the turn of the century, when being versed and schooled in classical religious Islamic texts was essential for true *Bildung*, regardless of one's religion.

It is worth noting that around half of Nawfal's collection, namely twelve of the twenty-three manuscripts, were used in the teaching of a number of classes at SPC, and thus helped strengthen and broaden the curriculum. Examples of these manuscripts include some works by Nawfal himself, for example *Ṣannā-ġat al-ṭarab fi taqaddumāt al-'Arab* (MS 953:N32sA), a work about Arab history, social and religious life. This volume seems to have been sent to the American Press for publishing in 1887 and was left in the custody of Henry Jessup from the Press, only to be returned to the SPC's library in 1894 as a gift by Jessup. Further investigation is needed to explain why it was never published. According to acquisition ledger books and College catalogues preserved in the archives, this manuscript was used in a course on literature at SPC, course 209, *Kutub Adab*, taught by Professor Jabr Dumit (1889–1921).<sup>20</sup> The story of this manuscript clearly illustrates the back and forth between scribal and print cultures at the time, and the porous boundaries between the two worlds that coexisted at the SPC and within the community at large.

Another illustration of the coexistence of scribal and print cultures at the SPC is a manuscript copied by Nawfal on Monday, 10 November 1845, namely *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*. This collection of poetry by the famous Abū l-Ṭayyib Aḥmad al-Mutanabbī (d. AH 354/965) would go to be printed in 1860 by no other than the American Press in Beirut, and then in 1861 in Berlin. It is therefore somehow surprising that in the late 1800s, when a course on poetry was offered at the College, Poetry Course 208, it is this manuscript and not the

19 This translates as "Ask for the book *Arnold the Greek*, printed in Jerusalem in 1885". Translation ours.

20 Jafet Memorial Library, AUB Archives, AA:2.7.10.1. Accession Records, Box 1. Book 1, p. 77. The accession records list which courses the manuscripts were acquired for and where they were included in a specific syllabus.

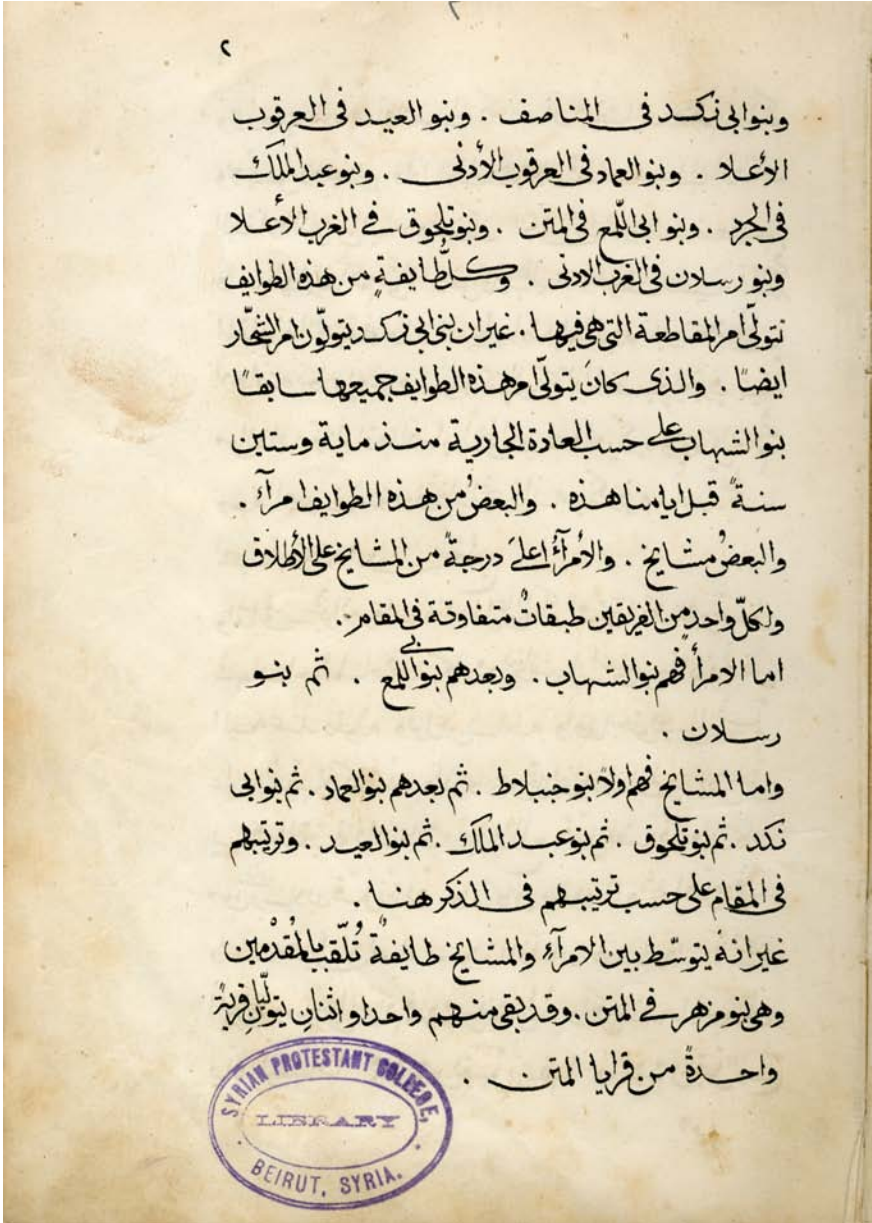


FIGURE 13.4A Nāṣif al-Yāziḡi, *Fī taqṣim Ġabal Lubnān wa-ḥālat al-ḥukkām fihi wa-l-ʿawā'id wa-l-adyān allatī tuḡad fihi*, 19th c  
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MS 956.92:Y35FA

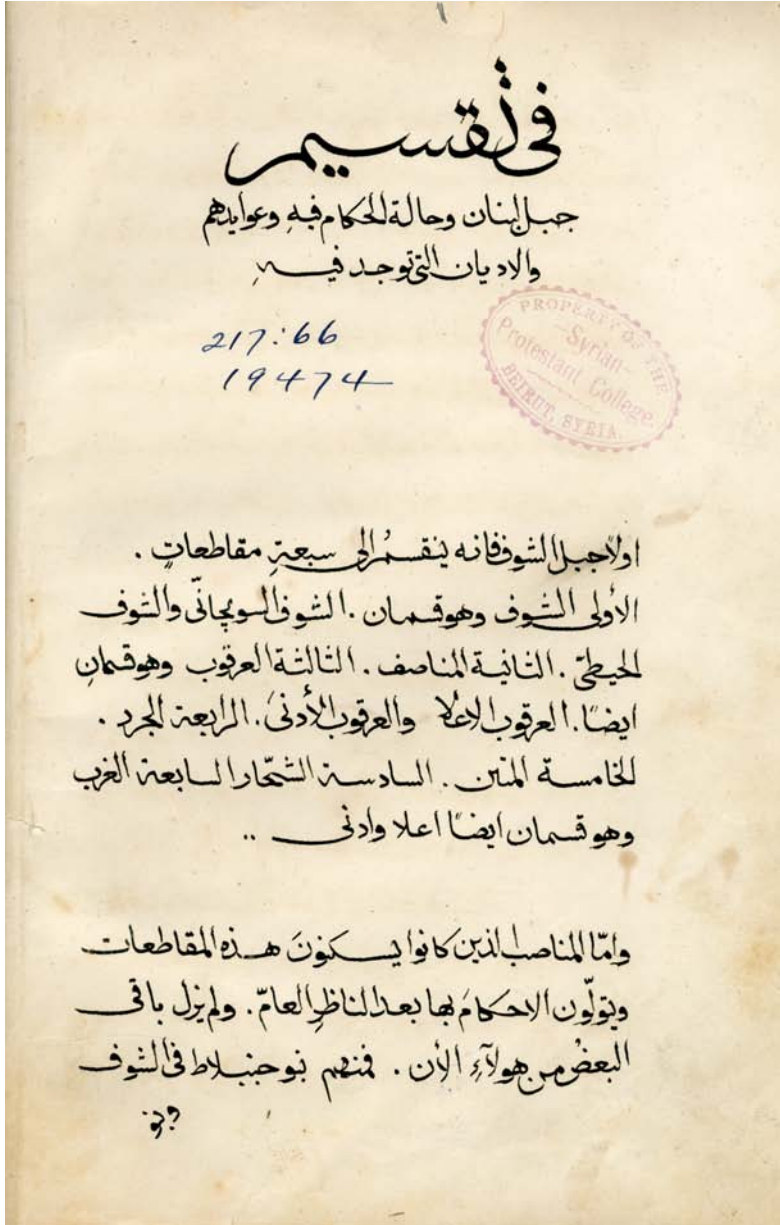


FIGURE 13.4B Nāṣif al-Yazīḡi, *Fī taqsim Ġabal Lubnān wa-ḥālat al-ḥukkām fihi wa-l-ʿawā'id wa-l-adyān allatī tūjad fihi*, 19th c  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
MS 956.92:Y35FA

edition published by the American Press which was listed on the syllabus of the course and used in the classroom.<sup>21</sup>

The Nawfal Collection also contains examples of manuscripts which crossed boundaries of geography, chronology, medium and provenance before making it to the SPC library: *Asmā' mamālik al-ālam* (MS 909;U82aA) is a work on history which was translated from the Greek by the priest ʿĪsā bin Bītrū al-Uršalīmī,<sup>22</sup> who was living at that time in Jerusalem; later on, a scholar and teacher by the name of Muallim Khalil Ayyoub used this translation to produce a map which Aftīmūs Mišāqa, Ayyoub's student, then living in Dayr al-Muḥalliṣ near Sidon, used to produce a manuscript with tables and dates. Mišāqa completed transcribing this manuscript on 15 August 1810. Later on, that same manuscript was checked, expanded on and copied, after comparison with another manuscript by the same title originating in Damascus, by Nawfal Ni'matallāh Nawfal al-Ṭarābulusī. He finished this copy, which was then bequeathed to SPC, on Monday 16 November 1842.

Here again, we have the story of a multi-layered development of a manuscript and of its crossing multiple cultures, mediums (a map drawn, then copied as a manuscript, then edited and expanded with added tables, the colophons tracing the various "editions" back to the master copy used by Nawfal), pointing to various geographical locations and eras, as a witness to the flourishing scribal practices in the region. This manuscript also bears witness to the personal connections existing between the scholarly community and to the inspiring role played by modelling between teacher and pupil, as well as by the love of learning in sustaining scribal and scholarly traditions in Arab and Islamic lands: in Nawfal's copy of this work, an introduction points out the value of studying history for the human mind and stresses that the main motivation behind copying this manuscript was, of course, a love of learning

21 Another such manuscript that was used in the curriculum is the following: *Kaṣf al-liṭām ʿan muḥayyā al-ḥukūma wa-l-aḥkām fi iqūmay Miṣr wa-barr al-Šām*, copied by the author in 1883, which was used in course 217 *Tārīḥ Ḥuṣūṣī*. It is a manuscript about the history of Syria and Egypt gathered from original Ottoman documents and translated by Nawfal into Arabic. The manuscript reflects the author's interest in documenting the history of the Middle East during the Ottoman Period.

22 Isa Petro (Bitru); see Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. III: *Die Schriftsteller von der Mitte des 15. bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949, p. 159. On him see Stefan Reichmuth, "Mündlicher und literarischer Wissenstransfer in Ägypten im späten 18. / frühen 19. Jahrhundert: Arabische Gelehrte und ihr Zugang zu europäischer Naturwissenschaft", in *Buchkultur im Nahen Osten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Tobias Heinzelmann and Henning Sievert, Bern et al., Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 27–52, here pp. 35–37.

and the modelling of the student scribe on his teachers. This may very well be one of the distinctive features of a form of learning that was peculiar to scribal practices, where a skill, a practice, existed between teacher and pupil, rather than a pure intellectual connection, as is now the case, for the most part. The introduction of the manuscript reads:

وهذا قد اتخفته منسوخا بغاية التحقيق والتدقيق ورتبته على منوال الطريف على حالة التوفيق  
وذلك لمحبة حضرة الاخ العزيز المعلم خليل ايوب الذي يليق به كل احتشام كونه محبا لذوي  
العلوم والنباهة وخليلا لاصحاب الفنون والفصاحة ...

This is what I have presented as a manuscript, most careful and meticulous, and arranged in an elegant manner, in case of success, for the love I harbour towards the dear brother, Master Khalil Ayyoub, who is most deserving of respect, as he is a true lover of scholars and the intelligent, and a friend to the masters of arts and eloquence.<sup>23</sup>

In general, we believe that Nawfal's collection both in terms of its content and its usage at the SPC shows shifting grounds in terms of ownership and usage, from personal libraries to institutional ones, as well as a clear overlay and coexistence between scribal and print cultures in terms of pedagogy, as well as the usage and readership of Arabic works, both in scribal and print forms.

### 3 The Collection of the Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences

The second core sub-collection of the AUB manuscript collection came from the Library of the Syrian Society of the Arts and Sciences (1847–1852), when 206 manuscripts were transferred from the Society to the Library of the Syrian Mission, and henceforth to the SPC in 1897, through the President of the Syria Mission, Reverend Eli Smith. The Syrian Mission arrived in Beirut as early as the 1820s as a delegation sent by the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions:

The missionaries' original plan was to secure themselves in Jerusalem and to evangelize the Jews and the Muslims. After a few years, some of the original missionaries died and others returned to the United States. For

23 Translation ours.

several reasons, Jerusalem did not work out, and the American missionaries settled instead for Beirut.<sup>24</sup>

In Beirut, the missionaries started several educational projects and activities, besides their religious ones, in an effort to win over a reluctant audience, promote knowledge and spread their ideas of progress. In 1847, American missionaries mostly affiliated with the Syria Mission combined forces with local scholars in Beirut to inaugurate the short-lived Syrian Society for the Arts and Sciences.<sup>25</sup> The Society was modelled on many European learned societies, and was open to members of all religious backgrounds. Its main aim was to promote knowledge, specifically scientific knowledge. The society met monthly, and within the five years of its operation it held some fifty-three meetings, more than twenty of which were open to the public. In its first years of operation, there were forty-two members, mostly Syrian-Arabs, in addition to a few foreigners, for example six American missionaries, the Prussian Consul General Schultz, and his dragoman Catafago, a local subject who nevertheless enjoyed the protection of Prussia. The society also counted some nine corresponding members (*a'dā' murāsīlīn*) spread among several countries and cities in the region.

Lectures by members of the Society (Eli Smith, Cornelius Van Dyck, Yūḥannā Wortabet, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Sālim Nawfal, Nāṣif al-Yāziḡī, Miḥā'īl Mišāqa, and Nawfal Ni'matallāh Nawfal) were delivered periodically, and many were published in the Society's proceedings. The papers covered a plethora of subjects, educational, sociological, scientific and literary. Many of the lectures covered contemporary issues, addressed popular interests and ideas, and echoed prevalent local ideas of the Nahḍa about progress and modernity.<sup>26</sup> Lectures were

24 Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity", *The American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), pp. 680–713.

25 Edward E. Salisbury, "Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 3 (1853), pp. 477–486.

26 The Society clearly embraced the prevalent ideas during the Nahḍa: the idea of progress, the value of *tamadḍun*, and the importance of science, as reflected in Wortabet's speech, as quoted in Salisbury, "Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences", p. 486: "The former times have passed away, their people are no more, their darkness is gone, the four elements are done with; and another era is opening for Syria, – an era of light. True, it is but the first break of day, after all, and that only partaking of the darkness of a long night; yet must it be sunrise ere we awake! Since the dawn has at length appeared, let us rise and bestir ourselves. Already, have many opportunities been lost; and there is much for us to do, before we reach the goal. Would that I be a trumpet-voice – it should arouse this whole country. I would sound a warning in the ears of the slumbering, that the dawn has come, and we must be up and doing."

delivered on the following sample topics: “On the delight and utilities of science”; “A discourse on the instruction of women”; “On the principles of the laws of nature”; “The measure of the progress of knowledge in Syria at the present time and its causes”.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.1 *The Library of the Syrian Society*<sup>28</sup>

The library of the Society had by-laws, clear borrowing privileges and regulations. In 1848 the collection included more than 2,600 volumes and around 756 manuscripts, most in Turkish and Arabic:<sup>29</sup> 242 of the manuscripts were received by the Syrian Society as a donation, while 514 were bought for the Syrian Society through the efforts of Ni‘matallah Tābit, who, being in financial trouble, sold his own collection for 7,000 piasters.<sup>30</sup> This sum would appear extremely modest when compared to the 70,000 piasters for the contemporaneous Rifā‘iyya library, which contains some 500 items and was purchased in Damascus in 1853 to be transported to Leipzig in today’s Germany.<sup>31</sup> The money to support this purchase was gathered through donations from the many friends of the Society, including Colonel Charles Churchill (1807–1869),<sup>32</sup> the famous author of *La Vie d’Abdel Kader* and of *Mount Lebanon: a ten year residence*, who was residing in Lebanon at the time. Churchill generously contributed some 2,200 piasters of his own money towards the purchase of this collection. Upon the dissolution of the Society, the custody of the library was transferred to the President of the Syrian Society, Eli Smith. Given the fact that

27 Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science”.

28 Anonymous, “Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften in Beirut”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 2 (1848), pp. 378–388, here p. 387; Salisbury, “Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences”; Edward Robinson, *Neuere biblische Forschungen in Palästina und in den angrenzenden Ländern: Tagebuch einer Reise im Jahre 1852*, Berlin, Reimer, 1857, p. 34.

29 Anonymous, “Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften”, report on the library by T. Haddad and N. Yazijy found on p. 382.

30 Boris Liebrecht, “Mit Gold nicht aufzuwiegen: Der Wert von Büchern im osmanischen Syrien (11.–13. Jahrhundert AH)”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 164 (2014), pp. 653–686, here p. 678.

31 See specifically on the price Boris Liebrecht, “Mit Gold nicht aufzuwiegen”, p. 678; on the library in general, among others, *idem*, “Die Rifā‘iyya: Neue Forschungen zur Geschichte einer Familienbibliothek aus dem osmanischen Damaskus”, in *Das Buch in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Sonderbestände der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig*, ed. Thomas Fuchs, Christoph Mackert, and Reinhold Scholl, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2012, pp. 265–279; *idem*, *Die Rifā‘iyya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016.

32 Cf. on him N.N. Lewis, “Churchill of Lebanon”, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 40 (1953), pp. 217–223.

the library had only one custodian in the transitory period, one would assume that the library underwent minimal loss in content. However, and perhaps surprisingly, only 206 manuscripts of a total of some 527 manuscripts known to have been part at some point of the Syrian Society's library were transferred to the SPC's library.<sup>33</sup> Where the rest of the manuscript collection ended up, and why those specific items were selected to be part of the SPC library, but not others, is a subject for further research. Were regular published texts mistakenly counted as manuscripts by the librarian or in the annual reports? Were any manuscripts from this collection transferred to other institutions besides SPC, and if so, where are they now? Be this as it may, the SPC librarians were extremely happy to see this valuable collection enter their library, and special measures were set up to care for it. The 1897 Annual Report of the SPC librarian at the time, Harvey Porter, to the Board of Managers states the following:<sup>34</sup>

During the closing days of the year, the Library of the Syrian Mission was deposited in the College Library. A distinct section has been allotted to it where it is to be kept intact, and used by the professors and students subject to conditions to be agreed upon between the Mission and the Librarian. This library contains about 2,600 volumes, many of which are very valuable. They are very largely different from those in the College Library.

The collection, which covered a very wide array of subjects – *fiqh* (129 mss.), the Quran and its explanations (75), Arabic grammar (73), the Hadith (23), literature (27), logic (31), poetry (20), medicine (24), rhetoric (12), the Turkish language (11), mathematics (9), and astronomy (8) – was immediately put to use in the SPC curriculum, and many of the 206 manuscripts of this collection were featured on syllabuses to supplement the lack of printed Arabic books, especially in the sciences, and still at this point, in Arabic language and literature,

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33 “The Syrian Society manuscript collection consists of 756 manuscripts in Turkish and Arabic, of which, two hundred and forty two were received as a donation while five hundred and fourteen were bought for the Syrian Society by Nimat Allah Thabet for the sum of 7,000 piasters. The money was supplied by grants of many friends of the Society one of them was Colonel Charles Churchill who paid 2200 piasters. Half of the collection of manuscripts was recorded in a ledger with title, author, physical description, physical condition with connotation of each manuscript that needs repair of binding, or lacking beginning or the ending. The library should recruit a staff member to try to find the missing parts in the collection itself to complete these manuscripts [...]” See Anonymous, “Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften”, p. 382.

34 Syrian Protestant College, *Annual report*, p. 144.

the humanities, history and other subjects. In fact, the AUB library accession records, the courses reading lists, and the course syllabuses at SPC all show that two distinct commentaries on *al-Hidāya*, the work on logic by Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Šāh (d. c. AH 802/1399–1400), were acquired and then used in an elective course “Mutafarriqat 220”, a course which covered a very wide range of subjects, such as astrology and astronomy, physics, logic and Islamic philosophy. One of the two manuscripts of *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* (MS 160:M466sA) that came to the library through the Syrian Society collection was authored by Ḥusayn b. Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Maybudī (d. c. AH 910/1504–1505) and copied in the eighteenth century. The second and oldest manuscript (MS160:I942sA) of this work by Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Šāh “which is currently in our collection, was produced in Ottoman Turkey in the fifteenth century AD. The latter manuscript bears the seal impressions of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (reigned 1481–1512) which appears on the second page, thus indicating that it was once in the custody of an imperial library”.<sup>35</sup> This imperial copy of *Šarḥ al-Hidāya* also bears an endowment deed featured on the penultimate page (page 73), *waqf marḥūm Muḥammad Šahzāda Sulṭān*, probably indicating that the manuscript was once in the Šahzāda Mosque, built by Sultan Sulayman in memory of his son Muḥammad, leaving us to wonder how the manuscript travelled from the Sultan’s palace to the mosque to finally end up at the Syria Mission and the SPC/AUB libraries, to be used in the curriculum of the College.

Another story worth telling is that of a work copied probably in Iraq in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, namely *al-Madḥal fī šināʿat al-ṭibb* by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. c. AH 311/923–AH 323/935). How this manuscript came to the library of the Syrian Society (and henceforth the library of the SPC) is not entirely clear. However, once there, it found itself in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries featured in the teaching of several medical courses at the College, including an introductory course on medicine entitled “Mutafarriqāt fī al-ṭibb 228”. The reading list of Mutafarriqāt fī al-ṭibb included, besides this manuscript, published contemporary medical manuals in both Turkish and English, in addition to a few other manuscripts, for example *Kitāb šarḥ kitāb Abuqrāt al-hakīm al-Uṣūl fī šarḥ al-Fuṣūl*, MS 610:I134kA, by Abū al-Farağ Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Karakī ibn al Quff (AH 630/1233–AH 685/1286), and a commentary on *Fuṣūl Abuqrāt*, i.e. the aphorisms of Hippocrates. The copy of this manuscript used in the course and held in the Syrian Society’s library

35 Digitized Arabic Manuscripts at the AUB Libraries; <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/jafet/manuscripts/MS160/index.html> accessed 22 August 2016.

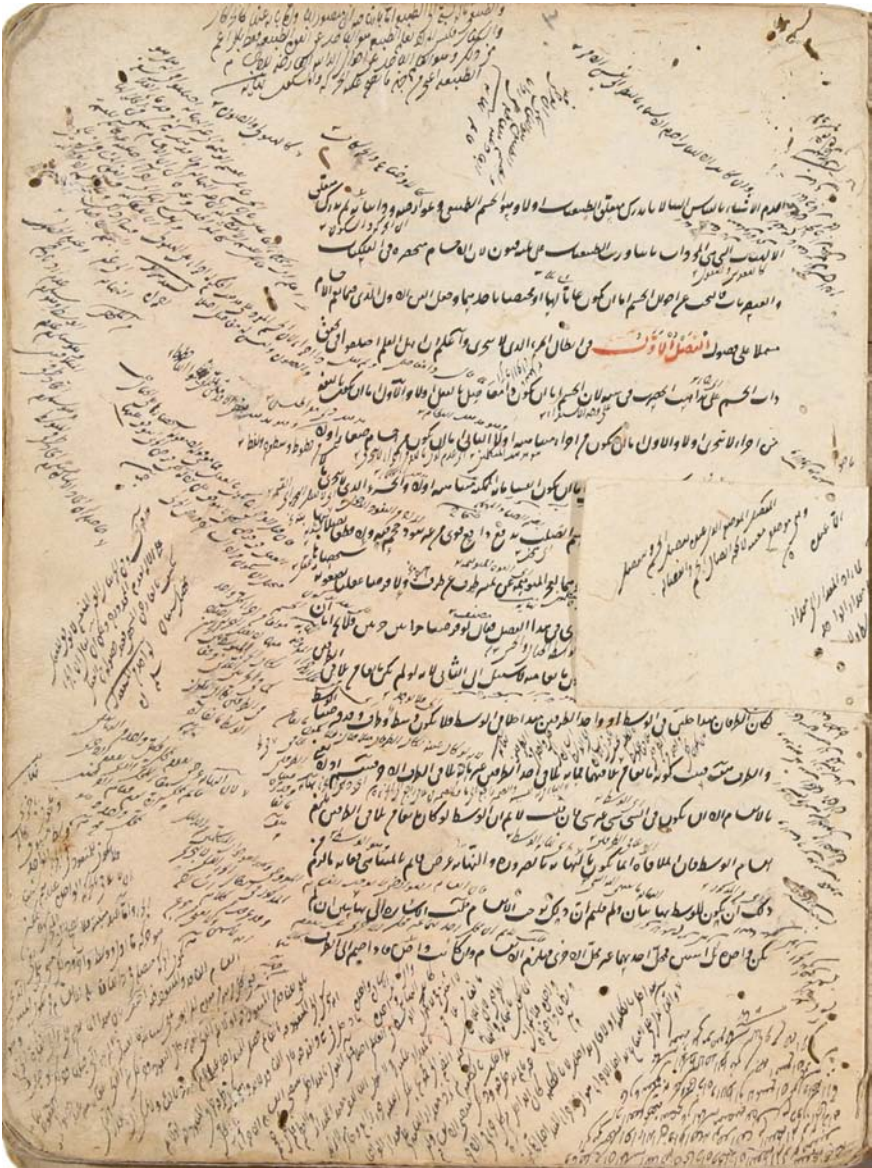


FIGURE 13.5A Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Šāh, *Šarḥ al-Hidāya*, ca. 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 610:1134KA

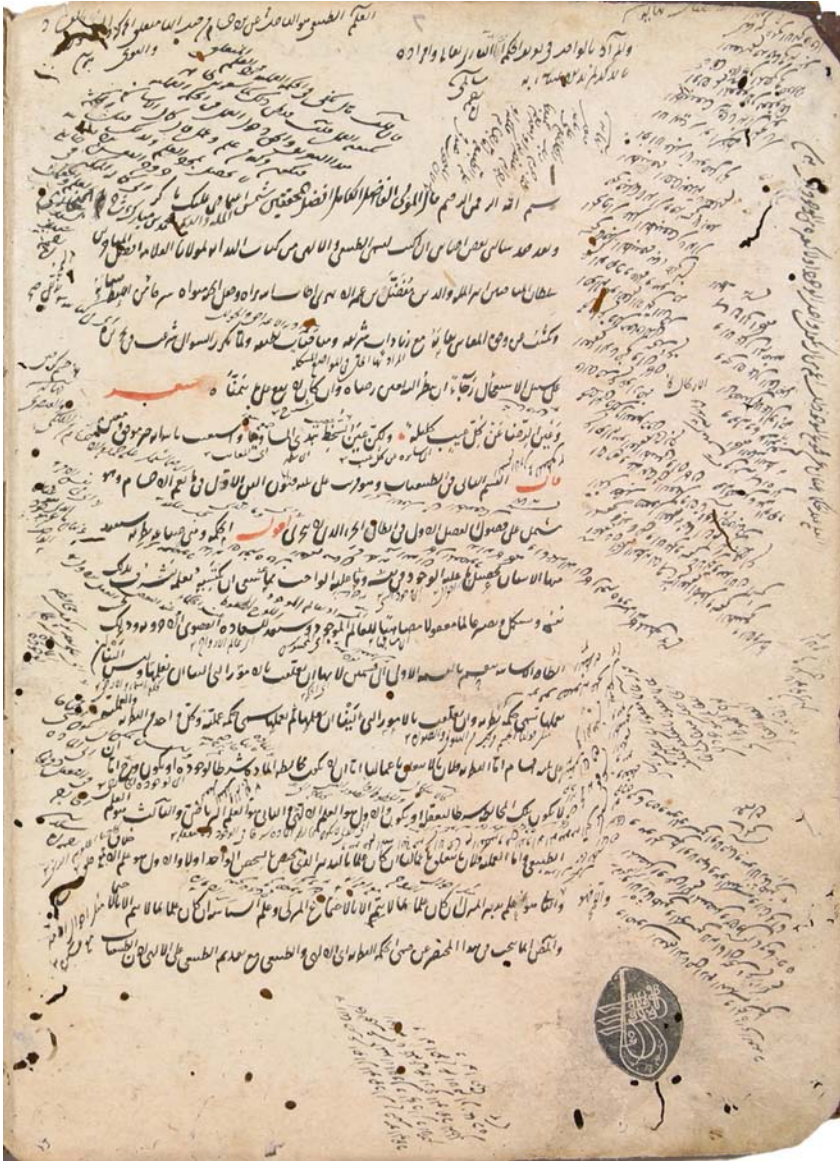


FIGURE 13.5B Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Šāh, *Šarḥ al-Hidāya*, ca. 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS 610:1134KA



FIGURE 13.5C Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārak Šāh, *Šarḥ al-Hidāya*, ca. 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, MS 610:1134KA

was copied in AH 781/1360, probably in Syria, and was previously owned by Muhammad Abū l-Luṭf al-Ḥanafī as well as by the physician Naṣrallāh al-Šāmī and his son. Also on the reading list of this course was another interesting manuscript, *Intihāb al-Iqtidāb*, (MS 610:1311A), a concise medical manual in the form of questions and answers by Abū Naṣr Saʿīd b. ʿIsā ibn Ḥayr al-Masiḥī (d. AH 658/1260), a doctor from Baghdad, copied by Anṭūn Buṭrus Šukrallāh in Syria during the nineteenth century. The manuscript has a small section on astrology as well as an index of medical terms, and must have come in handy as a glossary as well as a concise introduction to various aspects of basic medicine.

Indeed, it seems that the Syrian Society, and hence the SPC, tried to collect manuscripts that specifically document Arab medicine, sometimes in multiple copies as well as in abridgments (*muḥṭasar*), selections (*intihāb*) and commentaries (*šarḥ*) on the same base text.

As exemplified by this discussion, two interesting considerations are worth exploring in fuller depth, to unravel the ways in which the College's practice of collecting for the sake of usage in the curriculum influenced the outlook of young Levantines educated at this liberal arts college, as new grounds for the usage and readership of these manuscripts emerged.

- a) From our current perspective it may seem somewhat surprising that some Abbasid or classical Arabic works would feature alongside the latest Western printed manuals in the teaching of the practice (and not simply the history) of medicine, at one of the leading medical professional schools in the region: further research is needed to see how these texts were integrated into the curriculum, and how they ultimately influenced, in direct and indirect ways, the outlook of the rising new class of young professionals in the region.
- b) It is worth taking a closer look at the reasoning behind the development of the curriculum by the missionaries, and at the justification and sensitivity to the value of the Islamic and Arab scientific and medical heritage for shaping modern ideas of progress, medicine, efficiency and state-of-the-art medical treatment, as it was clearly the aim of the College to implement.

#### 4 The Collection of ʿIsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf

The third sub-core collection comes from the library of ʿIsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf (1869–1956). A prominent historian, linguist, book and manuscript collector, he built towards the end of the nineteenth century an impressive library in Zaḥla,

Greater Syria, which was considered by many to be a vital stop for researchers on their way from Mount Lebanon to Damascus. In 1925, the President of the AUB, Bayard Dodge, wishing to enrich the holdings of the university libraries in Arab and Islamic Studies to support research and teaching efforts, sent a delegation to Zaḥla to examine the ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf manuscript collection, the fame of which was by then well established, and charged them to select manuscripts that could be of interest to the university. The delegation was headed by Dr Asad Rustum, AUB's adjunct Professor of History at the time and a renowned scholar and editor of manuscripts. Dr Rustum worked for a long time in the Egyptian administration and knew the field of codicology, Arab history and Islamic Studies very well. Members of the delegation were chosen from the AUB History Department, which counted on its staff the following professors (no exact record of who participated in the delegation from this team is on file in the archives): Harold Nelson (1878–1954), Richard Merrill Saunders (1904–1998), Farid Zayn-ud-Din (1907–1973) and the famous Philip Hitti (1886–1978).

The delegation returned with the recommendation to purchase a collection of 350–500 manuscripts from Maʿlūf's library on a wide range of subjects with a strong focus on Arabic and Islamic studies, and religion (57), history (31), sciences including mathematics (31), astronomy (36), medicine (45), Arabic literature (62) and grammar (38), among others. This aptly reflected the interest of the university in supporting research, teaching and scholarship in these disciplines. The purchase of the chosen manuscripts was concluded in 1928 and the funds are said to have come from President Dodge's family. The 1928 AUB Annual Report of the President states the following:

Through the efforts of Prof. Asad Rustum, the University has been fortunate in coming into the possession of ʿĪsa Maʿluf collection of Arabic manuscripts. The collection contains some 550 [*sic*] manuscripts about a variety of philosophic, historical, and scientific subjects. Many of them are very old and all of them offer material for study of ancient Arabic culture. These new manuscripts, together with those already in the possession of the University, have been placed in a room adjoining the library, with the hope that a collection of writing on Moslem and Arab culture can be developed.<sup>36</sup>

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36 American University of Beirut, *Annual Report of the President of the American University of Beirut*, Beirut, American University of Beirut, 1926, p. 20.

The faculty seemed extremely pleased with this major addition to the library's manuscript collection and proceeded to integrate the collection into a few courses. However, and for the most part, the faculty relied on the collection for research and publications: by then the curricula were being revised and printing had become widespread, relegating manuscript readership, editing and consumption to the specialised fields of Arab and Islamic Studies and codicology. Gone were the days when manuscripts supplemented the lack of printed material and were integrated into courses and curricula as a means of studying various disciplines, as had been the case at the College just two decades earlier. In the early years of the twentieth century, as we have already seen in the previous sections, manuscripts in medicine or Islamic science, broadly speaking, were featured alongside the latest foreign textbooks in course syllabuses on practical medicine, sciences and elective courses at the College.

Reflecting the shifts in the fields and disciplines, the newly acquired manuscript collection seemed to support the faculty's efforts to edit and publish salient manuscripts while conducting advanced research. A few issues of *al-Kullīya*, an AUB alumni publication, from the 1930s, 40s and 50s, bear this out, clearly showing that the acquisition of the 'Īsā Ma'lūf manuscript collection motivated and supported a great interest in codicology, and Arabic language, history and science at AUB. From 1925 to 1930, around ten articles on manuscripts were published. Among them were Anīs Maqdisī's article "*Dīwān ibn al-Sā'ātī*";<sup>37</sup> Asad Rustum's article on Nawfal Nawfal's *Kašf al-liṭām*<sup>38</sup> and Sulaymān Abū 'Izz al-Dīn's article "*al-Tārīḥ fī maḥṭūṭāt: Šafḥa min tāriḥ*";<sup>39</sup> which describes "*ḥamlat Muḥammad 'Alī Bāšā wa-ḥiṣār 'Akkā wa-l-nizā' bayna al-Amīr Bašīr al-Šihābī wa-l-šayḥ Bašīr Junblāt*". Throughout the 1950s and the early 60s we are able to trace three short articles in *al-Abḥāt*, an AUB publication, on specific manuscripts coming from the Ma'lūf and other collections by well-known AUB faculty members, for example Nabīh Amīn Fāris' article on an unpublished treatise by al-Ġazālī, *Kitāb al-Risāla al-laduniyya* (MS 297.3:A81LA),<sup>40</sup> or Iṣḥāq Mūsā al-Ḥusaynī's short article on "*Waṣīyya li-Abī Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Muslim ibn Qutayba ilā waladiḥī*", a short manuscript included in the manuscript compilation entitled "*Maḥṭūṭat al-šaḥīfa al-ġarrā*",

37 Anīs Maqdisī, "Dīwān ibn al-Sā'ātī", *al-Kullīya*, 2 (1925) 12, pp. 86–89.

38 Asad Rustum, "Maḥṭūṭat Nawfal Nawfal 'Kašf al-liṭām 'an muḥayyā al-ḥukūma wa-l-aḥkām", *al-Kullīya*, 10–11 (1924–1926), pp. 85–127, 36–42, 84–89, 130–132, 42–50.

39 Sulaymān Abū 'Izz al-Dīn, "al-Tārīḥ fī maḥṭūṭāt: Šafḥa min tāriḥ", *al-Kullīya*, 11 (1924–1925) 2–3, pp. 55, 117.

40 Nabīh Fāris, "Risāla lam tunšar li-l-Ġazālī", *al-Abḥāt*, 14 (1961) 2, p. 206.

MS 170:121saA.<sup>41</sup> Several members of the AUB Faculty would go on to edit literary and historical manuscripts from the Ma'lūf Collection.

Moreover, the strong component of the sciences featured in the Ma'lūf Collection, which contains many important manuscripts in these fields, as described below, would go on in the 1950s, 60s and 70s to feed the interests and research of another pioneer in the field of Islamic science at AUB, namely Edward S. Kennedy (1912–2009). The latter was a prominent AUB faculty member in the mathematics department, a teacher and mentor of several Islamic science students who went on to build stellar careers in the field, for example George Saliba (Columbia University), Frans Bruin (Harvard University) and David A. King (Goethe University). Kennedy was editing, researching and publishing books on Arab sciences, which relied on several manuscripts found in research centres and libraries around the world, including the AUB Ma'lūf manuscript collection. The purchase of this collection went a long way towards supporting major research in Arabic and Islamic science at AUB. It provided a strong material base for the talented faculty at AUB who were working in these areas, and contributed immensely to the high standing of the university in these fields in the mid-twentieth century.

Now a brief description of 'Īsā Iskandar al-Ma'lūf, his background, research, and most importantly, his collection: who was he and what was his library like?

Born in 1869 in Kafr 'Iqāb, a village in the mountains of Lebanon's Matn province, to a noteworthy family, Ma'lūf was a prominent historian and writer. His library was known to be a Mecca of scholars in Syria. It is said to have included almost 1,200 rare manuscripts and more than 20,000 books on literature, philosophy, history, religion, astronomy, medicine and sociology. Ma'lūf worked as a teacher in many schools in Syria and was an active journalist, poet, translator and author. He edited numerous newspapers, e.g. *Lubnān*, *al-Ātār*, *al-Aṣr al-ġadīd*, and also worked as a correspondent for Ṣarrūf's *al-Muqtaṭaf*. Ma'lūf lectured widely and authored several books, for example *Dawānī al-quṭūf fi tāriḥ Banī Ma'lūf*, *al-Ġurar al-Tāriḥiyya fi l-Usar al-Yāziġiyya*, and *Tāriḥ Lubnān*. He was an active member of a number of prestigious literary societies, including Maġlis al-Ma'ārif in Zaḥla and Damascus, al-Maġma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī, al-Maġma' al-'Ilmī al-Lubnānī, and the prestigious Maġma' al-Luġa al-'Arabiyya fi l-Qāhira, al-Maġma' al-'Arabī in Brazil. Ma'lūf was strongly committed to the revival of the Arabic language and to preserving and documenting the historical heritage of the region.

41 Iṣḥāq Mūsā, "Waṣiyya li-Abī Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Muslim ibn Qutayba ilā waladihī", *al-Abḥāt*, 7 (1954) 1, p. 68; Anīs Maqdisī, "Maḥṭūṭa qadīma", *al-Abḥāt*, 19 (1966) 3–4, pp. 384–394.

Ma'lūf's work with manuscripts began at an early age, most certainly infused and encouraged by his family, who shared similar values and worked in related fields. Throughout his numerous travels, Ma'lūf systematically tried to acquire many early imprints and rare manuscripts. He surveyed the field, scouted and inventoried available manuscript collections in the region, while corresponding and exchanging manuscript copies with scholars and historians in the region and across the globe to build his collection and support the research of fellow scholars. Tirelessly and selflessly, Ma'lūf helped scholars complete an edition of a manuscript or supported their research through guidance and advice, or by lending some of the works he owned. This belief in public service and in the need to preserve the scribal heritage of the region, to study and open it up to researchers, led Ma'lūf to open his library regularly to researchers from all backgrounds and geographic locations – his study in Zaḥla would receive regular visitors. At the same time, his selfless love for the written word was accompanied by a ruthless dedication for the preservation of his library; it is reported that only those escorted by 'Īsā Ma'lūf himself were permitted to access the library's manuscripts or books. Ma'lūf's possessive adoration for his library is most aptly embodied in a calligraphic work which he is known to have hung at the entrance to his study. The two verses of poetry were traced by King Farouk's calligrapher, the famous Naḡīb al-Hawāwīnī, and framed the entrance of the spiritual and cultural haven that his library constituted for researchers, thereby following a longstanding practice of declaring one's dedication and passion for the written work with these verses:

ألا يا مستعير الكتب دعني  
 فإن إعارتي للكتب عار  
 فمحبوبي من الدنيا كئابي  
 وهل أبصرت محبوبا يعار؟

O you borrower of books, leave me alone!  
 Lending my books is a shame  
 My book is my true love:  
 Have you ever seen a lover being lent?

It is appropriate to say that Ma'lūf belonged to a dying breed of scholars and historians: he was a true manuscript lover, a codicologist and chronicler of Arab history in the classical Arab and Islamic tradition. A brief overview of most of the manuscripts in his collection reveals a peculiar and now-disappearing

method of work in which extensive personal additions adorn the margins while pages are added to many manuscripts. Here, Ma'lūf meticulously recorded essential notes: biographical information about the author, title, information about scribes, descriptions of the libraries where the originals or other copies were found, the existence and number of other copies and their whereabouts, the notation of any existing discrepancies between originals and published pieces, the listings of the manuscript subjects, the condition of the copy, the circumstances of obtaining the copy, indices, table of contents, previous corrections made by other scribes or scholars, his own opinion, personal commentaries, pages lost, and numbering and renumbering to account for any loss in content.

In an attempt to keep the page numbering consistent and as close to the original as possible, Ma'lūf would either add blank pages in place of missing pages, write himself any lost parts of manuscripts or insert relevant clippings from works or articles from magazines or newspapers to fill the void, and emend the work at hand. His work was meticulously devised to serve as a guide to aid codicologists and researchers avoid confusion and uncertainty and to build on his own scholarly work, following the traditional Islamic learning method of adding commentaries on commentaries. Alongside this, his craftsmanship in terms of restoring destroyed pages and his manual binding of fragile works sets him apart from the vast majority of his own contemporaries. His extremely thorough and scholarly method, as well as his appreciation and love for the material objects that manuscripts constitute, was widely acknowledged, praised and heralded. Records obtained from his library indicate that prominent scholars who accessed his library following his death greatly benefited from his erudition. For example, the Dean of the Lebanese University, Fu'ād Afrām Bustānī, wrote in a visitor book for the Ma'lūf Library:

When you enter the library of the late Ma'lūf you feel a sense of awe and respect for the scholar who built this haven: embodied in this sanctuary is the model of a fine "šayḥ" impressive with his erudition, and the legacy he left for generations to come.

And the Lebanese poet, Šukrallāh Ğurr, praised Ma'lūf's effort in compiling such a salient, prolific and diverse library, deeming it "worth of substituting for the National Library, in case, God forbid, the latter is lost".<sup>42</sup> Both opinions

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<sup>42</sup> Isā Iskandar al-Ma'lūf Collection, AUB, Jafet Library Archives (the translation is ours); the cataloguing of the collection is in process.

clearly demonstrate the admiration that many scholars held for Ma'lūf, his library, scholarly efforts, culture and erudition.

The content of Ma'lūf's collection that entered the AUB libraries is diverse. Subjects covered include medicine (human and veterinary), pharmacology, mathematics, geometry, algebra, astronomy, logic, *fiqh*, Christian theology, books on the Druze community and religion, *adab*, history and geography. The collection also comprises unique works which were not widely collected at the time on social mores, popular practices and music, folklore, daily life, genealogy, jokes and music. It included the personal archives of contemporary writers, poets, historians, scientists and physicians, and genealogical trees for almost every family in the region. Indeed, it is safe to say that 'Īsā Iskandar al-Ma'lūf probably belongs to the last generation of the Arab chronicler historians, before history became institutionalised in the modern form as taught today in most universities and colleges.

In order to give a better sense of the content of his library, we highlight four items which illustrate the value and significance of this collection:<sup>43</sup>

1. *al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk wa-l-wuzarā' wa-l-wulāt* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī (MS:172.2:G41tbA) is a manual of advice composed for rulers, ministers and governors on how they should govern their realms. This manuscript was probably produced in Egypt at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is a fine example of a late Mamlūk manuscript, as can be seen in the quality of the coloured paper, the beauty of the calligraphy and the contemporary brown morocco binding.<sup>44</sup>
2. *al-Sihāh fī l-luġa* by Ismā'īl al-Ġawharī (MS:492.73:J41sA) is a lexicon copied by Muẓaffar b. Maḥmūd b. Abī Qāsim al-Ardabīlī in AH 638/1240. This manuscript was produced in the last years of the Abbasids, who were annihilated by the Mongols in AD 1258. The sacking of Baghdad resulted in the destruction of many libraries containing priceless manuscripts. Many of the surviving manuscripts and the calligraphers were taken by the invaders to the Mongol courts in Central Asia. The manuscript contains an unclear ownership note, "*qad dahāla fī mulk al-faqīr Muṣṭafā Bāqī-zāda,*" a former judge in an unidentified place. It constitutes a rare extent example of very few surviving manuscripts from that period.

43 Digital copies of the manuscripts mentioned below can be accessed through the AUB libraries webpage: <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/jafet/manuscripts>.

44 Ibid.



FIGURE 13.6A Abū Ḥamid al-Ġazālī, *al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī naṣīhat al-mulūk wa-l-wuzarā' wa-l-wulāt*, 15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS:L72.2:G4LTBA





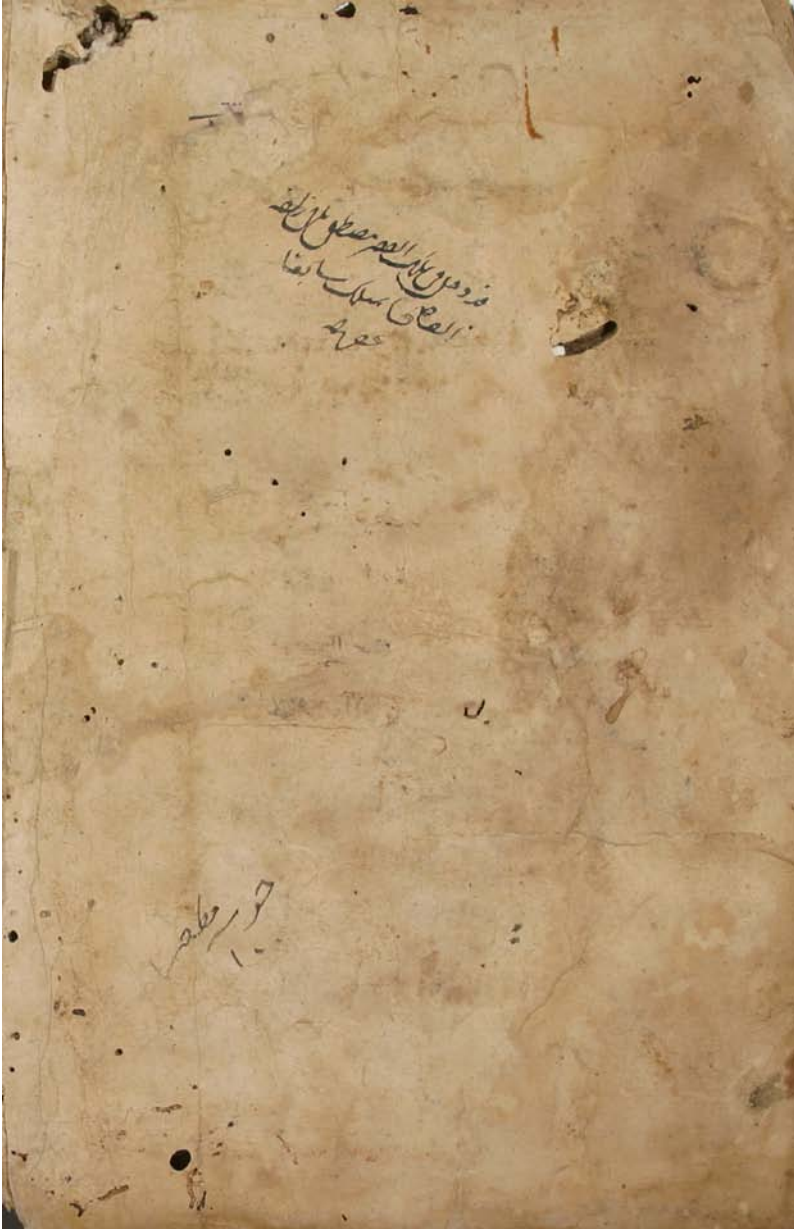


FIGURE 13.7B Ismā'īl al-Ġawharī, *al-Sihāḥ fi l-luġa*, AH 638/1240  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
MS:492.73:J41SA

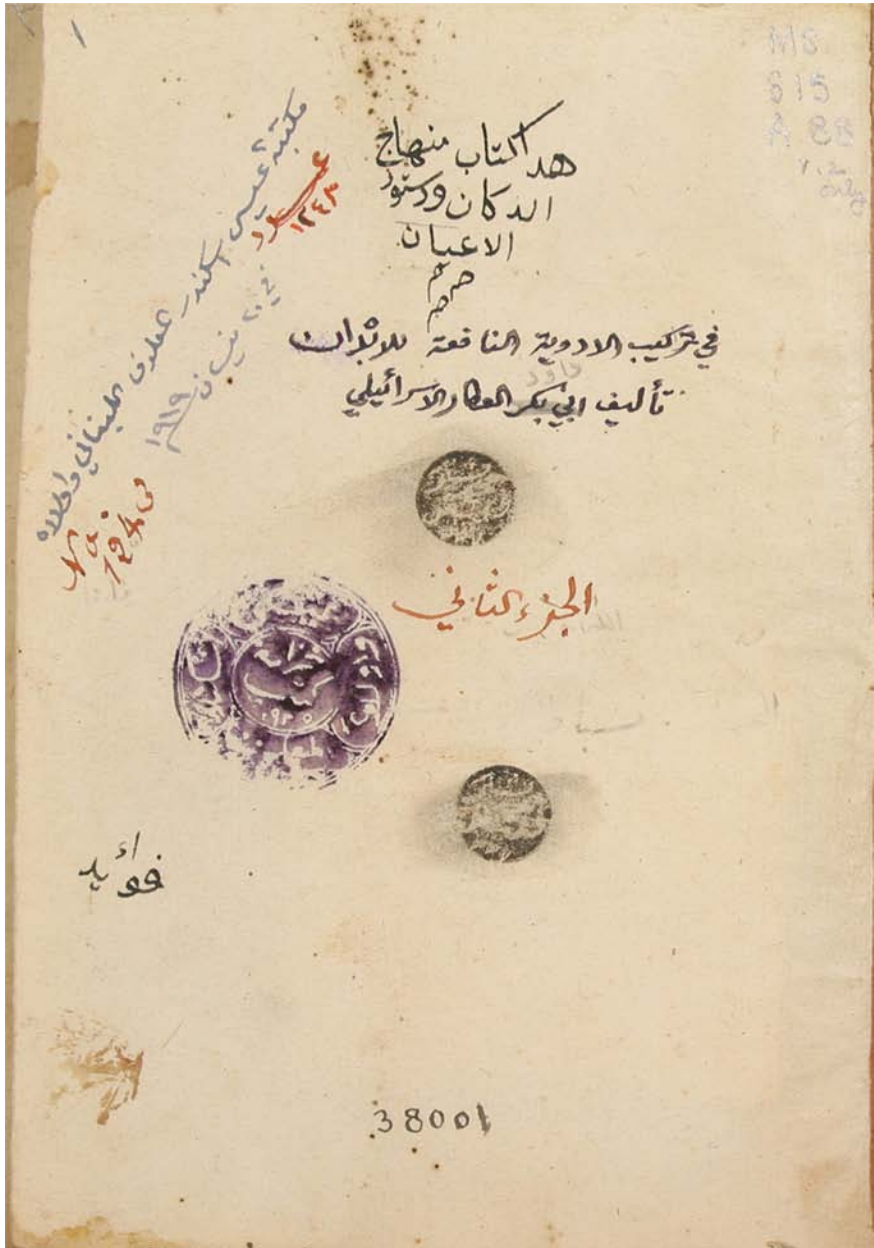


FIGURE 13.8 Dāwūd al-‘Aṭṭār al-Isrā’īlī, *Minhāġ al-Dukkān*, AH 739/1338  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES,  
 MS:616:SA18AA

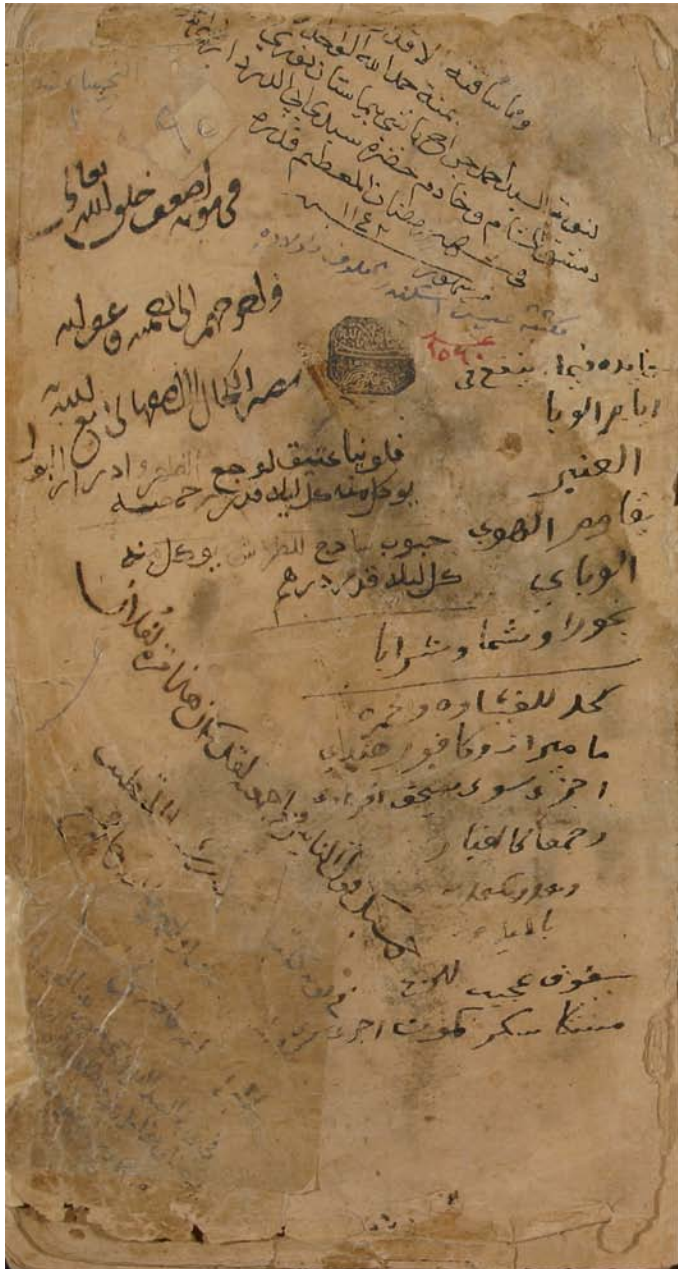


FIGURE 13.9 Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Samarqandī, *al-Asbāb wa-l-‘alāmāt*, 14th–15th c  
 AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, MS 616:SA18AA:C.1

3. *Minhāj al-Dukkān* by Dāwūd al-‘Aṭṭār al-Isrā’īlī (MS:615:A88:v.2) is an authoritative treatise on pharmaceuticals copied by Mūsā b. Ya‘qūb in Cairo in AH 739/1338. The manuscript has several ownership and readership marks, indicating that it was read by several scholars, for example Abū Bakr al-‘Umarī in AH 985, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Īsā al-Ġarrā’ihī, and owned by Burhān al-Dīn b. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥanbalī. It was acquired by Ma‘lūf on 20 April 1919. It is a fine example of how manuscripts were shared among scholars.
4. *al-Asbāb wa-l-‘alāmāt*, by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Samarqandī (MS:616:Sa18aA), was produced in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, and carries an ownership mark stating that this manuscript was acquired by Naṣr al-Kaḥḥāl al-Iṣfahānī and in AH 1142/1729 by Aḥmad, chief surgeon at the Bīmāristān (hospital) al-Nūrī built for the poor in Damascus by the Sultan Nūr al-Dīn Zankī, who had originally also supplied the hospital with a library of medical books.<sup>45</sup>

The Ma‘lūf collection clearly contains some important works. However, by the time the collection was acquired by the AUB libraries in the late 1920s, and in the decades to follow, the era of studying and reading manuscripts in the classroom as a tool for learning other disciplines was gone. It was clear that by this stage, manuscript collections constituted, for the most part, objects of research themselves. They had stopped being direct tools of learning about various other disciplines, and were no longer integrated into multi-disciplinary curricula and classes – the field has become much more specialised.

## 5 Conclusion

In closing, we would like to note that much interesting work has been done recently regarding the effect of scribal practices on the design and production of the printed book, thus suggesting that scribal and print practices did not only coexist at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also that they fed each other. In fact, many of the presses operating in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, including the Syria Mission and SPC’s American Press in Beirut were clearly inspired and influenced by scribal aesthetics in the design and production of their early imprints.

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45 For the Bīmāristān al-Nūrī and its library, see Youssef Éche, *Les bibliothèques arabes publiques et semi-publiques en Mésopotamie, en Syrie et en Égypte en Moyen Age*, Damascus, Institut Français de Damas, 1967, pp. 235–236.

These early printed books emulated key features of manuscripts in their design in terms of the display of title pages, pagination systems, colophons at the end of printed books, publication notes, frontispieces, *ta'qib* or catchwords, space for marginal commentaries, printed marginal commentaries (mimicking the lithograph [*tab'a hağariyya*] as a way of transposing a mirror image of the manuscript text onto paper using limestone), binding designs inspired by classical Islamic bindings, and in their usages by scholars and readers (many of these early imprints feature ownership marks, hand-jotted marginal notes and commentaries).

We have aimed in this paper to suggest that this overlap between print and scribal practices and customs was not only limited to the design of the printed book, but also extended to readers' habits and attitudes towards the printed book, to curricular development, to the relation between teacher, pupil and learning tools, and to scholarship in general, carrying over many influences of scribal readership practices into the modern age in subtle and gradual ways.<sup>46</sup> In fact, it has been our intention to suggest that there is a need to look more closely at the usages, readership habits and institutionalised curricula that were being constructed and disseminated around the turn of the century, and at the role that manuscript production, readership and usage played in influencing and affecting many aspects of pedagogy, scholarship and readership during this formative and transitional period for higher education in the region.

Such a close examination of the influence and role played by scribal practice and manuscripts on the pedagogical changes taking place is needed in order to be able to give a fuller picture of the give-and-take between scribal and print practices, between traditional Islamic models of pedagogy that centred around scribal documents, and emerging modern institutionalised pedagogical models, such as those in institutions such as SPC, and other modern American colleges in the region (Robert College in Istanbul, and later on the American University of Cairo, for example). It is our hope that this will constitute grounds

46 Ownership notes still appear in many early imprints in our collection, as is the case with the following published book: *Kitāb Muğnī al-labīb* (CA 492.75:139mA:c.1), where one can find an ownership note on the flyleaf, "qad tamallakahū širā'an al-faqīr ilayhi ta'ālā Ğirğis Humām al-Suwayrī, 18 October 1877", with a stamp of Humām on the second page. In addition, scholars still used the margins of the book to add their own notes, commentary and elucidation of the text in the printed books just as they did with the manuscripts. A good example of this practice is *Natā'iğ al-afkār 'alā l-matn al-musammā bi-l-İzhār al-asrār* by Muştafā b. Ḥamza al-Aṭṭār, Istanbul, AH 1278/1861, with an ownership note, "owned by [...] ibn al-şayḫ Salīm al-'Aṭṭār 1293/1876 Naqşbandī".

for further, more elaborate studies, and will encourage in-depth and detailed investigation of modern Arab thought, pedagogy, and knowledge production and consumption.

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**PART 4**

*Damascus*





## Looking at Man in the State of Nature

### *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein on the Bedouin of the Syrian Steppe*

*Astrid Meier*

Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815–1905) is probably one of the most underestimated desert explorers of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> His travelogue, and his other publications even more so, are hardly known outside German-speaking scholarship. Wetzstein, who was Prussian consul in Damascus from 1849, undertook a journey southwards to the Hauran region in 1858 that lasted forty-four days to explore its eastern fringes. Soon after his return, he wrote a report for the Prussian Ministry of Exterior Affairs in Berlin that had funded the trip. In 1859, excerpts in German were published in the *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde* as a travelogue entitled “Reise in den beiden Trachonen und um das Hauran-Gebirge im Frühlinge 1858”. In the following year, it appeared together with a study of the “Sabaeen” monuments in eastern Syria, monuments built by the Sabaeans/Himyar of south Arabian origin, as an independent monograph

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- 1 For a recent biography of Wetzstein, see Ingeborg Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 2016; as a comprehensive survey of his life is still missing, one can still profit, among others, from Eberhard von Mülinen, “Des Nomaden Abschied: Eine Erinnerung an Konsul Dr. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (geb. 19. Febr. 1815 zu Ölsnitz, gest. 18. Jan. 1905 zu Berlin)”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 79 (1925), pp. 150–161; Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “Zum Gedenken an Johann Gottfried Wetzstein”, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 60 (1965), pp. 541–545; and Gerhard Küchler, “Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Königlich Preußischer Konsul in Damaskus 1848–1862, Orientalist und Freund Alexander von Humboldts”, *Jahrbuch für Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte*, 29 (1978), pp. 7–24. For a bibliography, see Hans-Jürgen Zobel, “Johann Gottfried Wetzsteins Schrifttum”, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 82/2 (1966), pp. 233–238. For his place among German Orientalists, see Haim Goren, “Zieht hin und erforscht das Land”: *Die deutsche Palästinaforschung im 19. Jahrhundert*. Aus dem Hebräischen von Antje Clara Naujoks. Mit einer Einführung von Moshe Zuckermann [= Schriftenreihe des Minerva Instituts für deutsche Geschichte Universität Tel Aviv, 23], Göttingen, Wallstein, 2003, pp. 185–193; Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, Washington, DC, German Historical Institute, 2009, p. 87 and 99; Ursula Wokoec, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945*, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 131, 150, 226 and 236; now also Ferry de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism: 1783–1914*, London, Routledge, 2014, pp. 49–51; and Michael Greenhalgh, *Syria's Monuments: Their Survival and Destruction*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, p. 53.

under the title *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen* (in the following article, *Reisebericht*). The second part is mainly a history of the Ghassanids in south-eastern Syria.<sup>2</sup>

In this report of some ninety printed pages, Wetzstein addresses three main topics: the geology, geography (toponymy) and archaeology of the regions through which he had travelled. Yet he ends his report with the following lines:

Here I close this report, in order not to make it too long, although I would have liked to add an ethnographic part describing the life and manners of the nomads whom I came to know during my journey. This is of interest because I found nearly the whole country through which I travelled had returned to the state of nature, covered with the black tents of Kedar.<sup>3</sup>

These lines are highly significant for understanding Wetzstein's way of looking at the world he lived in and for what he deemed worth presenting to his diverse audiences at home. At this time, Wetzstein was about to become known as a successful collector of manuscripts<sup>4</sup> and an expert on Levantine history, in particular the historical geography of Syria, its topography and the consequent implications for biblical exegesis. Yet Wetzstein was not an antiquarian historian in the Nietzschean sense.<sup>5</sup> His writings display a keen interest in what he

2 For Wetzstein as a pioneer of Ghassanid studies, see Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, Volume 2.1, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 11–15.

3 “Ich schließe hier diesen Bericht, um ihn nicht übermäßig auszudehnen, obschon ich ihm gern einen ethnologischen Theil über Leben und Sitten der Nomaden beigefügt hätte, die ich auf meiner Reise kennen gelernt habe; denn fast das ganze Land, welches ich durchzog, fand ich in den Naturzustand zurückgekehrt und mit den schwarzen Zelten Kêdars bedeckt.” Wetzstein, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen: Nebst einem Anhang über die Sabäischen Denkmäler in Ostsyrien*, Berlin, Reimer, 1860, p. 95. My translation. In the following, I will not translate passages from the original German as a working knowledge of the language is essential for approaching Wetzstein's texts.

4 For the extant collections, see the contributions in this volume; for Tübingen, see also Alba Fedeli, “The Kufic Collection of the Prussian Consul Wetzstein: The 1100 Leaves of the Universitätsbibliothek in Tübingen and their Importance for Palaeography and Qur'anic Criticism”, in *Writings and Writing: Investigations in Islamic Text and Script in Honour of Dr. Januarius Justus Witkam*, ed. Robert M. Kerr and Thomas Milo. Cambridge, Archetype, 2010, pp. 117–119; for the Leipzig collection called the Refaiya, see Boris Liebrecht, *Die Rifā'īya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016.

5 See for the distinction between monumental, antiquarian and critical history, Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, transl. Peter Preuss, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1980, the second of his *Untimely Meditations*.

calls “the life and manners” of the people, their language, material objects and the significance of these in social life.<sup>6</sup> As his diplomatic function also made him part of the political scene of late Ottoman Syria, he was familiar with the politics of the day and the various groups and actors that played a role in it.<sup>7</sup>

In Wetzstein’s eyes, the past was inextricably linked to what he perceived in his own time, so that past and present in many ways became indistinguishable. As a trained Orientalist, with a German post-doctoral qualification (*Habilitation*) in Oriental Languages from the University of Berlin, a doctorate in the same field and a Diploma in Theology from the University of Leipzig, his scholarly interests were based on a cross-disciplinary approach combining philology, biblical archaeology, geography and ethnography, as expressed explicitly in the following passage:

Das Hauptinteresse, welches Syrien für uns hat, ist das archäologische, namentlich das biblisch-archäologische. So wie der Topograph das Land mit der Bibel in der Hand durchwandert, so kann sich auch der Ethnograph einer Vergleichung der dortigen Lebensverhältnisse mit denen des biblischen Alterthums nicht entziehen, wo er sieht, dass sich beide entsprechen. Dieses ist nun in hohem Grade der Fall bei der ländlichen Bevölkerung der transjordanischen und trans-libanonischen Gegenden [...].<sup>8</sup>

Though taking the Bible as a guidebook, Wetzstein did not see divine intervention in the current state of the region, as others had done.<sup>9</sup> His aim was to elucidate the Scriptures and their history in human terms, as evidenced in

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6 See, for example, J.G. Wetzstein, “Der Markt in Damaskus”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 11 (1857), pp. 475–525; *Idem*, “Nordarabien und die syrische Wüste nach den Angaben der Eingebornen”, *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, n.f. 18 (1865), pp. 1–47, 241–282, 408–498; *Idem*, “Sprachliches aus den Zeltlagern der syrischen Wüste”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 22 (1868), pp. 69–194; also published independently, Leipzig, Kreysing, 1868; *Idem*, “Zwei Arabische Amulette”, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 4 (1872), pp. 42–44; *Idem*, “Die syrische Dreschtafel”, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 5 (1873), pp. 270–302.

7 Huhn, *Wetzstein, passim*.

8 Wetzstein, “Syrische Dreschtafel”, p. 271.

9 Ralf Elger, in an article focused on Jonas Korte (1683–1747), has argued for the need to integrate this branch of “Christian Orientalism” into the study of disciplinary histories of Oriental studies; see Ralf Elger, “Blessing and Curse in the ‘Promised Land’. Jonas Korte’s Travels in the Ottoman Empire 1737 to 1739,” in *The Piety of Learning: Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth*, ed. Michael Kemper and Ralf Elger, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2017, pp. 227–249. L.J. Porter, whom I will introduce presently, would become one of their number.

his influential interpretation of the Song of Songs as related to Syrian wedding festivities and as an anthology of love poems.<sup>10</sup> This approach is also evident in his later contributions to the commentaries on the Hebrew Bible by Franz Julius Delitzsch.<sup>11</sup> It became paradigmatic, as evoked in Wolf Graf Baudissin's foreword to Samuel Ives Curtiss's German edition of *Ursemitische Religion im Volksleben des heutigen Orients*.<sup>12</sup> Wetzstein remained an authority on Syrian questions until his death in 1905, at least among German-speaking scholars with a particular interest in philology, biblical exegesis, historical geography and toponymy.

This background also helps readers no longer as familiar with biblical texts as Wetzstein's contemporaries were to understand the reference to "the black tents of Kedar".<sup>13</sup> This is an allusion to the Song of Songs/Solomon (1.5): "I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem; like the tents of Kedar." "Kedar" refers to the second son of Ishmael/Isma'īl (Gen. 25:13; 1 Chronicles 1:29), the firstborn of Abraham, son of Hagar. The name is explained in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* as

a nomadic tribe or league of tribes in the Arabian Desert. Kedar is mentioned in Genesis 25:3 [*sic*] and 1 Chronicles 1:29 among "the sons of Ishmael," the latter being tribes of Arabs known from the eighth century B.C.E. onward in the desert tracts surrounding Palestine [...]. The mode of

10 See his article "Die Syrische Dreschtafel", pp. 287–294; and *Idem*, "Bemerkungen zum Hohenliede", in Delitzsch, Franz J., *Biblischer Commentar über die poetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, vol. IV, *Hoheslied und Koheleth*, Leipzig, Dörffling & Franke, 1875, pp. 162–177.

11 For a comprehensive list including translations, see Zobel, "Schrifttum".

12 Baudissin, Vorwort (Foreword), in Samuel Ives Curtiss, *Ursemitische Religion im Volksleben des heutigen Orients: Forschungen und Funde aus Syrien und Palästina*, Vorw. von Wolf Wilhelm Grafen Baudissin, Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1903, p. v: "Der Verfasser hat sich zur Aufgabe gesetzt, aus Bräuchen und Anschauungen im heutigen Syrien und Palästina die älteste Religionsform der semitischen Bewohner Kanaans und seiner Nachbarländer zu rekonstruieren. Er schlägt also auf religionsgeschichtlichem Gebiet denselben Weg ein, den für eine Reihe kulturgeschichtlicher Momente der Nestor unter den Arabisten, J.G. Wetzstein, gewählt hat. Dieser ist zu seinen in ihrer Art abschließenden und vollendeten Darstellungen gelangt nach langjährigem Aufenthalt im Orient, der ihn gelehrt hat, noch jetzt nach mehreren unter uns Europäern verlebten Decennien nicht nur arabisch zu erzählen, sondern das Erzählte auch in arabischem Sinne nachzuempfinden."

13 For some interesting remarks about the importance of Old Testament studies in Germany and their role in the establishment of oriental studies as a discipline, see Josef van Ess, "From Wellhausen to Becker: The Emergence of *Kulturgeschichte* in Islamic Studies", in *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and its Problems*, ed. Malcolm H. Kerr, Malibu, Undena Publications, 1980, pp. 27–51, here pp. 40–42, and Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 105–123.

life of the Kedarites, as reflected in the Bible, was associated with the rearing of sheep and camels [...] and with dwelling in tents and in unfortified villages and camps.<sup>14</sup>

Wetzstein considered the nomadic groups of the Syrian Steppe to be “in the state of nature”, living a hard life adapted to the harsh environment and exacting climate of the desert fringes. Hence the Bedouin of his day served him imaginatively to people the biblical landscapes he was travelling through. He also showed an interest in the living language of the Bedouin, which resulted in a number of articles and shorter texts. These are highly valued today, but in Wetzstein’s own time, his preoccupation with a seemingly degenerate form of Arabic discredited him as a philologist and academic scholar, even in the eyes of some of his closest colleagues.<sup>15</sup>

My interest in Wetzstein began a long time ago with his descriptions of the market of Damascus.<sup>16</sup> Since then, my focus has turned to the rural environment of the Syrian cities, which also plays an important role in that article. In contrast to many others, Wetzstein really had experienced village life, which makes his observations particularly interesting to historians, even if the story of his failed agricultural investments need not occupy us here.<sup>17</sup> It is the aim of this short contribution to point out the value of Wetzstein’s writings for the political, economic, social and cultural history of the rural societies of that region. Though based on published material, it does not claim to be comprehensive, nor can it elaborate on the multifaceted characteristics of Wetzstein’s writing, which would merit the kind of interdisciplinary approach that has been fruitfully applied to the writings of Charles M. Doughty.<sup>18</sup>

My argument will proceed in three steps. The first section explores in some detail why, and in what ways, Wetzstein was interested in the desert. The second

14 Israel Eph'al, “Kedar”, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem/New York, Keter, Macmillan, 1971–1972, vol. 16, p. 1351.

15 See, for example, the correspondence between Delitzsch and Baudissin, letter dated 17 May 1868, in *Briefwechsel zwischen Franz Delitzsch und Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin: 1866–1890*, ed. Otto Eißfeldt and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1973, p. 151: “Du sprichst von dem Colleg bei Wetzstein; daß Du mit Deiner Mißbilligung dieser Wahl Recht hast, sehe ich jetzt selbst ein; [...] es ist nicht das beduinische Arabisch, das Consul Wetzstein behandelt sondern das in Damaskus gesprochene, welches er bestimmt von jenem unterscheidet. Doch mag Das für mich auf Eines hinauskommen.” Cf. Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 87–99.

16 Wetzstein, “Markt”.

17 See Huhn, *Wetzstein*, pp. 201–255.

18 See *Explorations in Doughty's Arabia Deserta*, ed. Stephen E. Tabachnick, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1987.

considers Wetzstein's place among the desert travellers of the mid-nineteenth century and asks why his *Reisebericht* was not published in English. The third focuses on the importance of his writings for a better understanding of the politics of the desert fringes of mid-nineteenth century Syria.

## 1 Wetzstein in the Desert

According to his own recollections, presented in a lecture in Berlin in 1881, Wetzstein during his stay in the Arab East, which lasted from 1848 to 1862, made seven journeys.<sup>19</sup> These trips had different political and scientific aims and varied in terms of duration and the regions he travelled through. I will concentrate here on his two major expeditions, which were financed by the Prussian state and led him to the fringes of the Syrian Steppe (*bādiyat al-Šām*), in today's southern Syria, northern Jordan and Israel/Palestine.

When Wetzstein started on his first desert journey in April 1858, he had been in Damascus acting as the representative of the Prussian king for nearly ten years. His work did not leave him time for frequent and extensive travel, but he often mentioned minor excursions in passing. Yet he did not need to travel to learn about the impact of the desert on the economic and political life of Damascus. His investments in Sikkā and Ġassūla had brought him into close contact with the rhythms and conditions of life on the fringes of the Syrian Steppe. I will explore this aspect in more detail in the third section of this article.

Wetzstein's motivation for undertaking these expeditions to the fringes of the desert was both political and scholarly. Whereas the first needs to be understood implicitly, from the funding of the trips to the official report on his findings, the second is directly addressed in the *Reisebericht*. Wetzstein refers to two eminent German authorities who had asked him to travel in order to determine the desert line in this region,<sup>20</sup> which meant venturing into a veritable "terra incognita".<sup>21</sup> He had already argued in 1852, in a long report called "Motivierung", written in Berlin to petition the Prussian government for remuneration for his post, that there was a need to explore the regions east of the River Jordan:

Der Ursprung und die Geschichte unserer Religion machen uns die antiquar. Forschungen auf diesem Gebiete zur Nothwendigkeit, Forschungen,

19 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, p. 12, note 26.

20 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 96: "[...] zur Bestimmung der Steppengrenze einen Ausflug in den Osten Mittelsyriens zu unternehmen."

21 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 39, 292.

die obgleich schon vor Jahrhunderten begonnen, doch bis heute nicht abgeschlossen sind [...] Namentlich aber erheischen gerade die transjordanischen Provinzen mit ihren zahlreichen entweder nur oberflächlich oder noch gar nicht beobachteten Monumenten unsere Aufmerksamkeit. Herr Professor Dr. Ritter, unser genialer Begründer der neueren Geographie, äußerte noch vor wenigen Wochen gegen mich, dass er nur einmal den Hauran u die östlich von ihm gelegenen Länder durchwandern möchte. Und allerdings sind diese Gegenden mit den Ruinen zahlreicher Städte u Burgen noch von keinem Europäer besucht worden, selbst Burckhardt hat nur den westlichen Hauran durchstreift.<sup>22</sup>

The first expedition of 1858 lasted forty-four days and led him through the volcanic lands of the Şafā, the Lağā and Hauran. The second journey took him and the geodetic engineer Richard Dörgens from Berlin further south into regions east of the Jordan, a trip that lasted sixty-nine days from 19 April to 26 June 1860.<sup>23</sup> Wetzstein did not publish a report on this second trip, only some short remarks about their visit to places related to the story of Job.<sup>24</sup> A lecture by Dörgens was published in 1860, but it is not of relevance here.<sup>25</sup>

On both occasions, Wetzstein travelled in state, with a large entourage – he did not travel in disguise as some of his predecessors did.<sup>26</sup> He was a well-known figure in public life and also used his connections while travelling. His second journey was interrupted rather brutally by the events in Lebanon that later became known as the “civil war” of 1860. The travellers quickly returned to Damascus, where they arrived less than two weeks before the massacres in the Christian quarter, which took place from 9 to 11 July 1860. The violence of these events overshadowed the rest of Wetzstein’s stay in Damascus.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to many other travellers, Wetzstein seems not to have been a desert enthusiast.<sup>28</sup> Unlike Wallin, Burton or Doughty, he does not dwell on

22 Wetzstein, “Motivierung der Notwendigkeit einer Vertretung Preußens in Damaskus”, 1852, quoted in Huhn, *Wetzstein*, p. 291.

23 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, p. 12.

24 Wetzstein, “Das Hiobskloster in Hauran und das Land Uz”, in Franz J. Delitzsch, *Das Buch Job. Mit Beiträgen von Prof. Dr. Fleischer und Consul Dr. Wetzstein, nebst einer Karte und Inschrift*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, Dörffling & Franke, 1876, pp. 551–604, here p. 560.

25 Richard Dörgens, “Consul Wetzstein’s und R. Dörgens’ Reise in das Ostjordanland”, *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F. 9 (1860), pp. 402–420.

26 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 1–3; cf. Dörgens, “Consul Wetzstein’s and R. Dörgens’ Reise”, pp. 402–403.

27 Huhn, *Wetzstein*, pp. 143–200.

28 Compare, for example, Georg August Wallin, “Narrative of a Journey from Cairo to Jerusa-

life in the desert and how its simplicity and starkness inspires the traveller, but remains a rather distant observer of a landscape which appears inhospitable and at times even horrible to him. He reports a conversation with a Bedouin in which the Şafâ is referred to as part of hell;<sup>29</sup> or he calls the defunct volcano al-Şunayta'a ("die Şnêta'a", p. 11) "one of the most horrible places on earth". Consider, by contrast, his pleasure and delight at seeing lights upon entering the recently repopulated village of Tayma, where, as he writes, he thought he was coming to the "dwellings of the Rephaim".<sup>30</sup>

The Rephaim are mentioned in the book of Genesis and other books as a people of oversized stature, often called "giants", the inhabitants of Palestine before the Canaanites.<sup>31</sup> In a later work, Wetzstein expressed his misgivings about such allusions and about much of what passed as biblical scholarship.<sup>32</sup> As he explains in the second part of his *Reisebericht*, he started to question this reference and think about the historical Ghassanids as possible builders of the (now ruined) cities only after the actual journey.<sup>33</sup> This was motivated by fur-

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lem, viâ Mount Sinai", transl. Dr. Shaw, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 25 (1855), pp. 260–290, here pp. 263–270; for Doughty, see contributions in Tabachnick (ed.), *Explorations*; for British Orientalists, in particular Burton and Doughty, whom he considers the "two tangents of British Orientalism", see Andrew C. Long, *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930*, Syracuse, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2014.

- 29 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 9; see also p. 6: "[...] seine Formation hat etwas Höllisches und sein Anblick beengt die Brust und erfüllt mit Grauen."
- 30 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 21: "Mit Freuden begrüßte ich die Lichter, mit denen uns die Bewohner des Orts, den man seit einigen Monaten zu colonieren versucht hat, entgegen kamen. [...] mir wars, als sei ich in die Wohnungen der Rephaim gekommen. [...] verlebte ich in Têmâ einen meiner schönsten Tage. In der reinen, frischen Bergluft vergaß ich die Glut der Harra und das Schreckbild des Şafâ, die zehn Nächte auf bloßer Erde und das Schlammwasser der Ka's, das ich beim Trinken erst durch ein Tuch hatte seihen müssen, und die unheimlichen Gesichter der Ğêjât und S'tâje, die es mit Ingrimms angesehen hatten, wie ich tagelang in ihrem Lande maß und schrieb." Ğiyât and Şitâyâ are the two main nomadic groups controlling the Şafâ.
- 31 According to Shalom David Sperling, "Rephaim", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem/New York, Keter, Macmillan, 1971–1972, vol. 14, p. 79: "The Rephaim are known from biblical, Ugaritic and Phoenician sources. In the Bible two uses of the term are discernible: The first is as a gentilic (e.g. Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Deut. 2:11) referring to a people distinguished by their enormous stature. Especially singled out are Og king of Bashan (Deut. 3:11) and the powerful adversaries of David's heroes (11 Sam. 21:16, 18, 20)."
- 32 Wetzstein, "Excursion", in Franz Delitzsch, *Commentar über die Genesis*, 4th ed., Leipzig, Dörffling & Franke, 1872, pp. 561–590, here p. 572: "Man ist daran gewöhnt, auf dem Gebiete der bibl. Geographie den wunderlichsten Ansichten zu begegnen."
- 33 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 116–121; cf. pp. 81–95.

ther philological research into the available Arabic text material. The role of the “giant dwellers” of these stone cities was a point of contention in a debate that I will address in the next section.

In his own eyes, Wetzstein’s journey into the past in order to serve the “heilige Alterthumskunde”, incessantly collecting and recording information,<sup>34</sup> was very successful indeed:

So begann ich eine Reise, die trotz der kurzen Dauer von 44 Tagen reich ist an interessanten Specialitäten und deren Gesammtergebniss ein ausserordentlich günstiges genannt werden muss. Ich habe dasselbe in einem Tagebuche niedergelegt, das in 4 Heften zu je 110 Octavblättern 880 Seiten zählt, einige dreißig Beduinengesänge die ich besonders geschrieben habe, ungerechnet. [...] Die Ergebnisse dieser Reise umfassen mehrere Zweige der Wissenschaft, wie Geognosie, Geographie und Archäologie (Baugeschichte und Inschriftenkunde). Meine ethnologischen Notizen über seither unbekannte Stämme, oder solche, deren Bedürfnislosigkeit an die Urzustände des Menschengeschlechts erinnert, halte ich für werthvoll, und meine Poesien der Wüste bieten ein Arabisch, das man in Damaskus nicht versteht und von dem noch wenige Proben nach Europa gekommen sein dürften. Ich musste mir die meisten Lieder Vers für Vers commentiren lassen.<sup>35</sup>

On this journey, Wetzstein first went eastward to the lakes of the Marǧ (“Wiesenseen”, i.e. Baḥrat al-Ḥiǧāna and Baḥrat Bālā), then southwards along the Dīrat al-Tulūl (of recent volcanic origin) to the Ṣafā mountains, stopping at Ḥirbat al-Bayḍā in a depression called Ruḥba.<sup>36</sup> He then turned westwards through the black-stone desert of the Ḥarra towards the Ġabal Drūz and Hauran and into the Nuqra plain. From there he returned to Damascus, traversing the volcanic plateau of the Laǧā (the Trachon mentioned in the title of the *Reisebericht*, the second being the Ṣafā).<sup>37</sup>

Among the most important results of the expedition was a new map of the region, drawn by Heinrich Kiepert, which came to serve as a basic model for

34 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 4–5.

35 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 4–5.

36 See also Heinz Gaube, *Ein arabischer Palast in Südsyrien: Ḥirbet el-baiḍa*, Beirut, Franz Steiner, 1974, pp. 16–17.

37 For a short description of the route of the journey, see also Wetzstein, *Das batanäische Giebelgebirge: Excurs über Ps. 68, 16 zu Delitzsch' Psalmencommentar*, Leipzig, Dörffling & Franke, 1884, p. 19.

many later elaborations.<sup>38</sup> Another result relates to the origins of the many thousand ruined stone buildings and deserted villages still standing in these desert ranges. When Wetzstein travelled through them, these regions were under the control of nomadic groups who lived mostly in tents. What, then, could explain the presence of the stone buildings? The Bible, one of Wetzstein's guidebooks, spoke about the dwellers of these regions in several books, and could be interpreted as having predicted the future desolation of these ranges.<sup>39</sup> Yet Wetzstein could not agree with a biblical dating, arguing with what he saw as an anthropological fact. In his eyes, the builders could not have been nomads. Offering a new hypothesis, he suggested that the builders were a sedentary people of southern Arabian origin (from Yemen) called the Ḥimyar, immigrants, a people who had "adapted" to being ruled and paying taxes, unlike real nomads:

Was die Niederlassung dieser Völker ungemein erleichtern musste, war der Umstand, dass sie, wie alle sesshaften und ackerbaureibenden Völker, nicht jenen unbändigen Freiheitstrieb mitbrachten, der den Zeltarabern bis auf den heutigen Tag eigen ist. [...] aber von Haus aus an ein strenges, ja tyrannisches Regiment ihrer Tubba's, wie die jemenischen Könige hiessen, gewöhnt, erboten sie sich, Tribut zu zahlen, und darum wurden sie sowohl von den Parthern als von den Römern um so williger empfangen, als sie die verödeten Länder neu bevölkerten und zugleich einen starken Damm gegen die räuberischen Wüstenstämme bildeten, die durch sie, wie es scheint, sogar vollständig tributär gemacht wurden.

Jetzt wird es hell in Ostsyrien; die tausend steinernen Ortschaften, vom Kastellkranze an, der sich im weiten Bogen von Damaskus gegen den Euphrat hinzieht, bis hinab an die Grenzen von Ṭafile, stehen nicht mehr wie zeither als Fragezeichen auf den geographischen Karten, man weiss, wer sie gebaut und wie es möglich war, bis tief in die Wüste hinein und

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- 38 Heinrich Kiepert, "Note über die Construction der Karte zu Consul Wetzstein's Reise", *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F. 7 (1859), pp. 204–209; for the map which appeared under the title "Die Landschaften im Osten von Damaskus" in the *Reisebericht*, see [http://www.klaus-schwarz-verlag.com/manu/IU329\\_map1.jpg](http://www.klaus-schwarz-verlag.com/manu/IU329_map1.jpg). For the successor to this map, see Hermann Guthe, (ed.), "Dr. A. Stübel's Reise nach der Direct et-Tulul und Hauran 1882. Mit Beiträgen von Dr. Hans Fischer, Prof. H. Guthe, Prof. M. Hartmann und Consul Dr. Wetzstein", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 12 (1889), pp. 225–302, pp. 226–228.
- 39 For this explanation, see Josias Leslie Porter, *The Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places*, London, T. Nelson and Son, 1882 (first ed. 1865), pp. 18–20, 49–54; and Cyril C. Graham, "Explorations in the Desert East of the Hauran and in the Ancient Land of Bashan", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 28 (1858), pp. 226–263, here p. 257 and 260.

oft an Orte zu bauen, wo Sonnenglut, Wassermangel und geringe Bodenproduction kaum die Existenz fristen liess.<sup>40</sup>

Today the Ghassanid origin of the Hauran buildings is considered accepted fact. In Wetzstein's day, though, it remained contested and even made him some powerful enemies, which may have hindered the successful translation of his *Reisebericht* into English. These topics will be addressed in the next section.

## 2 Wetzstein among the Desert Travellers of the Mid-Nineteenth Century

The *Reisebericht* is among Wetzstein's best-known texts, occasionally quoted even today. A German biographer called it "epoch making".<sup>41</sup> In the English-speaking world, it is mostly forgotten. It would be an interesting project to explore in detail why Wetzstein did not find a lasting place among the desert travellers of the mid-nineteenth century. This would mean exploring more thoroughly his scholarly life after his return to Berlin and his network of contacts.<sup>42</sup> Here I can only point out the type of scholarly work his colleagues expected of him and why his *Reisebericht*, his most important independent publication, never appeared in another language, though we do know of some translation projects.<sup>43</sup>

During his long life Wetzstein remained a sought-after authority in the German-speaking Orientalist world. Many expected him to publish a work

40 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 105–106.

41 "Sein [...] zu jener Zeit Epoche machender Reisebericht", Mülinen, "Des Nomaden Abschied", p. 157.

42 For the need to re-evaluate Wetzstein's life after his return to Berlin in 1862, see also Rauch's contribution in the same volume. For Wetzstein's involvement in Tunisia 1870/1871, see Peter Heine, "Das Rohlf's/Wetzstein-Unternehmen in Tunis während des deutsch-französischen Krieges 1870/71", *Die Welt des Islams*, 22 (1982) 1/4, pp. 61–66.

43 Translations according to Zobel, "Wetzsteins Schrifttum", pp. 234–238: "The Monastery of Job in Hauran and the Tradition of Job: Appendix to Biblical Commentary on the Book of Job by F. Delitzsch", trans. Francis Bolton, Edinburgh, 1866, vol. 2, pp. 395–447; French: "Le pays d'Uz et le couvent de Job. Notes rédigées d'après un travail de M. J.-G. Wetzstein, publié dans le commentaire de Delitzsch, par Alexandre Lombard", *Le Globe*, vol. 16/2, 1877, pp. 61–75; "Observations on Isaiah XXI", trans. James Martin, Edinburgh, 1867; "Four Excursus to Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Psalms", trans. Francis Bolton, Edinburgh, 1871, vol. 1, pp. 412–420; vol. 2, pp. 417–420; "Contributions to Fr. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon", trans. M.G. Easton, Edinburgh, 1874.

along the lines he had hinted at in the paragraph quoted above, an ethnographic work “describing the life and manners” of the people he had met during his stay in the East.<sup>44</sup> C. Snouck Hurgronje, the famous Dutch scholar, wrote to him from Leiden on 6 November 1887, asking for a substantive work on the language and manners of the Arabs of their day, to paraphrase his German letter.<sup>45</sup> In 1897, Georg Jacob, whose “Altarabisches Beduinenleben” still retains some of its former authority, expressed his regret that Wetzstein had not become a second Lane:

Für die Ägyptischen Araber hat Lane in seinen Manners and customs of the modern Egyptians ein classisches Werk geschaffen. Ähnliches für die syrischen Araber zu leisten, wäre Wetzstein der Mann gewesen; da ihm die wissenschaftliche Thätigkeit verleidet wurde, lieferte er statt einer Gesamtdarstellung nur gelegentliche Mitteilungen und Aufsätze, die in Röhrich's Bibliotheca Geogr. Palaestinae S. 483–5 bibliographisch zusammengestellt sind.<sup>46</sup>

The dispersed nature of Wetzstein's oeuvre probably contributed to the fact that he was not well known outside Germany, except to a narrow circle of specialists of southern Syria.<sup>47</sup> Even among them, though, he was not prominent. This can be gleaned from the unpublished translation of the *Reisebericht*, which seems to be rather a story of missed opportunities than due to a lack of interest.

The source material for this preliminary inquiry into the history of Wetzstein's *Reisebericht* of 1859/1860 is mainly found in two exchanges in scholarly journals which took place in the twenty years after its publication. Early references can be found in the publications of a couple of British missionaries who visited Damascus and Wetzstein in 1861, Emily Alstom Beke and Reverend Charles Beke, who thought that in 1862 Wetzstein had become “Professor of

44 Wetzstein had plans for a three-volume work entitled *Die Sprache und das Leben der Wanderstämme Syriens*; see Zobel, “Schrifttum”, p. 233.

45 “[...] etwas von Ihren in Syrien gehobenen Schätzen zum *waqf* zu machen für die Wissenschaft des Orients [...] und uns mit einem größeren Werke über Sprache und Sitten der heutigen Araber zu beglücken”; quotations from Zobel, “Zum Gedenken”, p. 545.

46 Georg Jacob, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben: nach den Quellen geschildert*, Berlin, Mayer und Müller, 1897, pp. x–xi.

47 This is Fück's point, Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, Leipzig, Harrasowitz, 1955, p. 191: “Wetzstein war ein vorzüglicher Kenner Syriens und Palästinas; doch fanden seine Aufsätze nicht die nötige Beachtung, da sie meist an abgelegenen Stellen erschienen.”

Arabic in the University of Halle".<sup>48</sup> Emily Beke included a long passage from the *Reisebericht* on the warfare of the 'Anaza which she had translated into English, and she also mentioned Wetzstein's hypothesis of the Ghassanid origin of the buildings.<sup>49</sup>

Charles Beke was one of the protagonists in the controversy which filled some of the pages of the British journal *The Athenaeum* in 1870 and 1871.<sup>50</sup> This was an influential scientific and literary magazine published in London between 1828 and 1921. In his *Unexplored Syria* (1872), Richard Burton made fun of this public exchange of barbs among some distinguished British scholars in which Wetzstein played a central yet unexpected role but in which he did not himself intervene.<sup>51</sup>

The quarrel started with Josias L. Porter (1823–1889), an Irish Presbyterian missionary and author of *Five Years in Damascus* (1855, 2nd ed. 1870), John Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Syria and Palestine* (1858, 2nd rev. ed. 1868) and

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48 Charles Beke, "Notes on an Excursion to Harran, in Padan/Aram, and Thence over Mount Gilead and the Jordan, to Shechem", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 32 (1862), pp. 76–100, here p. 80. For Wetzstein's remarks about the couple's visit, see his "Über die Reisen des französischen Archäologen Herrn W.H. Waddington in Syrien", *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F. 13 (1862), pp. 209–216, here pp. 215–216. See Christoph Rauch's article in this volume for some remarks on the difficulties that Wetzstein faced upon his return in 1862 in re-establishing himself in the academic milieu of Prussia.

49 Emily Alston Beke, *Jacob's Flight: Or a Pilgrimage to Harran and thence in the Patriarch's Footsteps into the Promised Land*, London, Longman, et al., 1865, pp. 106–109. Cf. Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 143–145.

50 For a chronology of travellers in the Hauran region, see Guthe (ed.), "Dr. Stübels Reise", pp. 248–256.

51 Richard Burton and Charles F. Tyrwhitt Drake, *Unexplored Syria: Visits to the Libanus, the Tulul el Safa, The Anti-Libanus, The Northern Libanus and the 'Alah*, two vols., London, Tinsley Brothers, 1872, vol. 1, pp. 191–193: "Before leaving the Jebel Durúz Haurán, I can hardly refrain from giving my witness in the case of Porter *versus* Freshfield, which came on in the *Athenaeum* Court about July 1870. Plaintiff had asserted that he was the undoubted possessor, in virtue of discovery, presumption, and occupation, of certain giant cities, belonging not to Fin M'Coull, but to one Og King of Bashan; and he demanded an injunction against the defendant, who, wilfully mistaking sneering remarks and cynical allusions for logical arguments – ignorant moreover of the ethical law that 'criticism, to be effectual, must be honest' – had wilfully, scandalously, and injuriously asserted that most travellers in the aforesaid giant cities will be reminded, 'not of Og, but of the Antonines; not of the Israelitish, but of the Saracenic conquest.' The suit ended *magno cum risu* by a verdict of the jury of Reviewers, duly charged by Mr. Chief-justice Fergusson, that defendant and his party had 'disproved the existence of any such giant cities whatever;' and furthermore, that 'the so-called giant cities of Bashan were in fact no giant cities at all, but mere provincial towns of the Roman Empire.'" This anecdote can also be found in Greenhalgh, *Syria's Monuments*, p. 105, who, following Burton, does not refer to Wetzstein.

*The Giant Cities of Bashan and Syria's Holy Places* (1865).<sup>52</sup> After his return to Belfast in 1859, Porter became Professor of Biblical Criticism at Assembly College. In the second edition of his *Five Years in Damascus*, he attacked Douglas Freshfield's *Travels in the Central Caucasus and Bashan* (1869) for its dismissal of his, Porter's, own view that one could attribute the ruined stone buildings of the Hauran to the Rephaim, the last of whom was King Og, an Amorite ruler of Bashan.

Freshfield (1845–1934) was an English lawyer, best known as a pioneer mountaineer and traveller to Central Asia and the Caucasus; he was a member of the Royal Geographic Society. Freshfield defended himself by sending a letter to *The Athenaeum*, which opened the debate.<sup>53</sup> Charles Beke then intervened in support of Freshfield's view and named Wetzstein as a leading authority in this field, pointing to his wife's book *Jacob's Flight*.<sup>54</sup>

Porter had previously acknowledged Wetzstein's *Reisebericht* in his *Giant Cities*.<sup>55</sup> Now, he justified himself in a detailed letter, claiming that the *Reisebericht* had not presented any new findings but mostly contained plagiarised information that he and Cyril Graham had communicated to Wetzstein. He dismissed the travelogue in rather deprecating terms: "I said nothing about this as his 'Reisebericht' was a mere pamphlet and not translated into English."<sup>56</sup> The ensuing debate sheds light on the tensions between literal interpreters of

52 For some remarks about Porter and British biblical archaeologists, see also the introduction in *Cities of God: The Bible and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. David Gage and Michal Ledger-Lomas (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 13, 17. For a biography, see Thomas Hamilton, "Porter, Josias Leslie", in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee, London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1896, p. 46.

53 See the letter entitled "The Hauran Ruins" by Douglas Freshfield, *The Athenaeum*, no. 2224, 11 June 1870, pp. 774–775, followed by another, *ibid.*, no. 2227, 2 July 1870, p. 18.

54 Charles Beke, "The Hauran Ruins", *The Athenaeum*, no. 2226, 25 June 1870, p. 836, referring to Emily Beke, *Jacob's Flight*, pp. 227–229.

55 Porter, *Giant Cities*, p. 112: "Another traveller has of late traversed part of Bashan, and penetrated the desert eastward. I refer to Dr. J.G. Wetzstein, whom I had the pleasure of knowing as Prussian consul in Damascus. His little work, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen*, Berlin, 1860, is interesting and instructive. It contains the fullest account hitherto published of that remarkable region, the *Safa*." For Wetzstein's critique of Porter's position regarding Batanea, see Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 83–86.

56 Porter's response in a letter, also entitled "The Hauran Ruins", *The Athenaeum*, no. 2230, 23 July 1870, p. 117. Cyril Graham had published his findings in an article entitled "Explorations in the Desert East of the Hauran and in the Ancient Land of Bashan". Wetzstein and Graham's travels were known before the publication of the reports through an article by Carl Ritter, "Zwei Entdeckungsreisen in die Ostjordanische Städtewüste durch Konsul Wetzstein und Cyril Graham", *Zeitschrift für Allgemeine Erdkunde*, N.F. 5, 1858, pp. 339–349.

the Scriptures and their more historicist opponents, while at the same time pointing to several attempts to translate Wetzstein's *Reisebericht*. Burton himself proved a staunch defender of the originality of Wetzstein's text:

I need hardly quote in favour of the Ghassanian origin of the "Giant Cities of Bashan" the authority of Dr. Wetzstein, former H.B.M. Consul, Damascus. This Himyaritic emigration, like the undulatory theory of light, abundantly accounts for a multitude of isolated facts. When Mr. Porter writes that Herr Wetzstein studiously ignores the labours of his immediate predecessors (he has mentioned both Mr. Porter and Mr. Cyril Graham, in p. 83 and 137), and adds little, if anything, to the information gleaned by him, it would seem although the abolition of Og and his architecture, and a certain regard to fact somewhat detrimental to prophecy, as explained by the modern prophet, have impressed the author of "Five Years in Damascus" unfavourably in the matter of the Prussian (I may now say German) traveller's ability, and even literary fairness, we at once join issue. After painfully sifting a huge mass of modern rubbish, of irrelevant matter, of little-learned disquisition, and of what has been called "hashed Bible" – a late book is half-stuffed with quotations, when simple references would everywhere have sufficed, – I have found in the little "Reisebericht" the greatest possible relief. My opinion of its scholarship is so high that my spare hours are devoted to translating and annotating it. Of course, it does not pretend to the grand views of Volney, still the very best guide to Syria; to the architectural acumen of Messrs. De Vogué and Fergusson, or to the scientific specialities of MM. Waddington, Lartet, and the late Duc de Luynes. But as far as it goes, the "Reisebericht" contains more matter, especially in Scriptural exegesis, than many of our bulky double octavos.<sup>57</sup>

From another letter by Charles Beke to *The Athenaeum* in 1871, one can infer that though a translation had been envisaged directly after the publication of the *Reisebericht*, it had not materialised. The letter reads as follows:

It is with satisfaction I perceive from Capt. Burton's letter in the *Athenaeum* of Nov. 12 that he entertains the same high opinion as myself

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57 Richard Burton, "Hárran El Awāmīd and the Damascus Swamps", *The Athenaeum*, no. 2246, 12 November 1870, pp. 628–629; for W.H. Waddington's journeys, see also the report by Wetzstein, "Reise des Herrn W.H. Waddington", pp. 209–216.

of Dr. Wetzstein's "Reisebericht," and that he justly condemns the Rev. J.L. Porter's animadversions thereon. I am also rejoiced to learn that that accomplished and indefatigable scholar and traveller is occupied in translating and annotating Dr. Wetzstein's truly valuable work, with a view, as I hope, to its publication in England. For his encouragement in his meritorious task I may mention that, when that work first appeared, now some ten years ago, the late Admiral Washington, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, my old and esteemed friend, was so impressed with its importance, that he wished it to be printed in translation in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society – Sed Diis aliter visum*.<sup>58</sup>

Ten years later, in early 1881, Wetzstein's scholarly standing once again became an issue in the British journal *The Academy*. A certain William Simpson, reviewing a recent publication, wondered "whether Wetzstein is a trustworthy authority or not".<sup>59</sup> The response was immediate in the form of a letter by William Wright (1830–1889), Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge since 1870, which was published in the following issue a week later. His is the most concise characterisation of Wetzstein in English that I have been able to find:

Mr. W. Simpson will no doubt be glad to learn that Dr. J.G. Wetzstein, now Professor in the University of Berlin, is a thoroughly "trustworthy authority." He resided in Damascus as German consul, not "for some time", but for many years. His collection of Arabic MSS. is one of the chief treasures of the Berlin Library. He knows both ancient and modern Arabic thoroughly, as is shown by his contributions to the *Zeitschrift der D. M. G.* and other periodicals. He has explored in person almost every district of Syria and Palestine, and Mr. Simpson will probably read with pleasure and profit his short Appendix to Delitzsch's Commentary on Job, second edition, 1876, entitled "Das Hiobkloster in Hauran und das Land Uz." In reality, few European scholars have done so much for the topography and epigraphy of the land eastwards of the Jordan as Prof. Wetzstein; and, from my

58 Charles Beke, "Harran El Awamid", *The Athenaeum*, no. 2267, 8 April 1871, p. 437. In December 1871, Freshfield brought the debate also to the United States, by publishing an article entitled "The Giant Cities of Bashan" in the Methodist periodical *The Ladies' Repository* from Cincinnati (1841–1876). Porter seems not to have answered.

59 William Simpson, "Review of 'The Land of Gilead: With Excursion in the Lebanon'. By Laurence Oliphant (Wm. Blackwood & Sons)", *The Academy*, no. 454, 8 January 1881, pp. 22–23, here p. 23. The discussion is about Wetzstein's identification of Der'ā with the biblical Dreid, residence of King Og of Bashan, see Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 47 and 77.

personal knowledge of him, I should say that he is a very sober-minded, matter-of-fact man, whose account of a place or an incident is unlikely to be distorted or exaggerated.<sup>60</sup>

Interestingly enough, Wright did not refer to the English version of the article he mentioned, which had been translated as early as 1866, but to its revised version in German. As far as I know, this is the only place in which Wetzstein commented on the controversy with Porter. He stated:

[...] der englische Missionar, Hr. J. L. Porter, welcher vor 20 Jahren in einer Schrift *Five years in Damascus* von der Wiederauffindung einer antiken Ruinenstadt Batanaea nahe am nordöstlichen Fusse des Hau-rangebirgs berichtete, neuerdings die Wahrheit seines damaligen Berichts mit auffälliger Ostentation öffentlich betheuert und alle Angaben späterer Reisender für falsch erklärt, welche jenen Fund auf ein kleines Dörfchen el-B<sup>u</sup>teina (el-Btêné gesprochen) reduzieren. Besonders ärgerlich äussert er sich über meine Beschreibung dieser Oertlichkeit.<sup>61</sup>

In the same issue of the 1881 *The Academy*, Burton mentioned his own translation of the *Reisebericht* again. It seemed finished at that time but, as he said, he had not yet looked around for a publisher.<sup>62</sup> He probably never did, as it would not have been easy to publish a text of such a scholarly nature. One only has to consider the difficulties Doughty faced in the process of getting his *Arabia Deserta* published to understand the changing market for travelogues.<sup>63</sup> The tone of the *Reisebericht* with its many biblical references did not conform to the changing tastes of what, after 1880, would increasingly become a mass market of texts produced about Bedouin and Arabia.<sup>64</sup> We shall presently see that the

60 William Wright, "Dr. J. G. Wetzstein", *The Academy*, no. 454, 15 January 1881, p. 46.

61 Wetzstein, "Das Hiobskloster", p. 554, but see also *ibid.*, p. 555: "Doch dürfen wir, um billig zu sein, nicht die ganze Schuld auf Porter schieben; ein Theil derselben trifft auch Eli Smith und seinen Reisegefährten Ed. Robinson [...]" Cf. Porter, *Five Years*, vol. 2, p. 57.

62 Richard Burton, "Captain Burton's 'Lusiads'", *The Academy*, no. 458, 12 February 1881, p. 119: "Referring to a letter by Prof. Wright in your columns (January 8) it is as well to state that long ago I translated and annotated Prof. Wetzstein's valuable little *Reisebericht*. As yet, however, I have not had time to cast about for a publisher."

63 Tabachnick, *Explorations*, p. 5; see also Marchand, *German Orientalism*, p. 98: "Travelogues did sell and some Orientalists tried to supplement their incomes in this fashion; but at mid-century, the market was much better in England, [...]. It took some time to find a popular audience even for distinguished travelers."

64 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 145.

“sober-minded” Wetzstein had not been one given to romanticising the figure of the Bedouin, as the fashion increasingly demanded.

### 3 Wetzstein on Desert Politics in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century

The issues discussed in these nineteenth-century debates seem far removed from the interests of most researchers today. Nor do they usually share Wetzstein’s preoccupation with biblical exegesis. Hence, he could easily be dismissed as yet another of that considerable number of prejudiced observers who constructed an imaginary Orient, to put it in Saidian terms. However, the debates reported on above may remind new readers of Wetzstein’s scholarly rigour and his diverse interests. This is my reason for arguing below that Wetzstein’s texts merit the attention of historians even today.

The following remarks will concentrate on a decisive moment in Bedouin history in southern Syria, which Wetzstein happened to witness during his expedition to the Hauran in 1858. Consequently, I will leave to a competent specialist the rich treasure trove of his writings on Bedouin language and poetry for a future study. As Wetzstein himself remarked, it is nearly impossible to make sense of these works of art if not assisted by a knowledgeable expert.<sup>65</sup>

Wetzstein’s writings about what he saw, read and collected have previously served as a source for historical enquiry.<sup>66</sup> His detailed account of the clashes between the Ruwala and the Wuld ‘Alī in the summer of 1858, published at the end of the second part of the *Reisebericht*, is often used in historical analyses of that time.<sup>67</sup> The ensuing power struggle, which lasted until 1863, marked, as Norman Lewis noted, “something of a turning-point in the relationship of the Wuld Ali and the Rwala, and in the relationship of both of them to the government”.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, there is no need here to retrace the chronology or the direct political implications. In the following paragraphs, I will show that

65 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 5: “[...] und meine Poesien der Wüste bieten ein Arabisch, das man in Damaskus nicht versteht und von dem noch wenige Proben nach Europa gekommen sein dürften. Ich musste mir die meisten Lieder Vers für Vers commentiren lassen.”

66 For example, see Norman Lewis, “The Syrian Steppe during the Last Century of Ottoman Rule. Hawran and the Palmyrena”, in *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East*, ed. Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 33–43; F.E. Peters, “Romans and Bedouin in Southern Syria”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 37 (1978) 4, pp. 315–326.

67 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 137–150.

68 Lewis, “The Syrian Steppe”, p. 35.

Wetzstein's writings offer more than mere additions to chronology and political history.<sup>69</sup> My focus is on the aspects of change, mobility and movement, which might seem paradoxical given Wetzstein's view of the unchanged nature of nomadic life on the desert fringes.

As we have seen, Wetzstein's main interest was to understand the biblical past. Drawing from ethnography, geography, archaeology, philology and biblical exegesis, his work is therefore often one of translation, which is evident in his use of historical analogies. Here, for instance, is his explanation of the Kedar of biblical times:

Unter Kêdar wird man sich die Wanderstämme von den Grenzen des petraeischen Arabiens bis zur Ḥarra zu denken haben. Sie scheinen das gewesen zu sein, was die Aneze, oder wenigstens die Stämme der Ruwala gegenwärtig sind, wie diese werden sie wohl ihre Winterquartiere im Gôf gehabt haben.<sup>70</sup>

The use of analogy implies change. Wetzstein himself often evokes change, change on different timelines, for instance in the quotation at the beginning of this article: "This is of interest because I found nearly the whole country through which I travelled had returned to the state of nature, covered with the black tents of Kedar." We may understand the "return to the state of nature" as the long-term result of the re-establishment of nomadic groups (*Wanderstämme*) in the regions under consideration, i.e. as the destruction of civilisation and new desertification. In fact, Wetzstein attributes these phenomena explicitly to the agency of the Bedouin: "In Syrien allein haben die Beduinen Wüsten geschaffen, in denen die Schutthaufen der verödeten Dörfer noch heute nach Tausenden zählen."<sup>71</sup> The everlasting threat of the desert people over-running civilisation is evoked in a rather long passage full of religious and even apocalyptic overtones in Wetzstein's article on the market of Damascus.<sup>72</sup>

Yet within this generic and seemingly stable category of the Bedouin and the nomads, Wetzstein is well aware of historical change. He informs his read-

69 For a concise overview, see Lewis, "The Syrian Steppe".

70 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 89. For other such instances of translation, see the highly interesting remarks on the religion of the Bedouin, which would merit an article of their own, Wetzstein, "Tapferkeit", pp. 389–390; on the use of the term "Arab", see Wetzstein, "Über die Tapferkeit der Araber", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 10 (1878), pp. 388–401, here pp. 400–401.

71 Wetzstein, "Tapferkeit", p. 393, cf. Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 44.

72 Wetzstein, "Markt", p. 493.

ers of several waves of emigration from the Arabian Peninsula and also details a “who’s who” of these migrations:

Im letzten Jahrtausend hatte dieselbe [i.e. the Arabian Peninsula] keine Auswanderung von geschichtlicher Bedeutung. [...] Für uns ist diese Uebersiedlung [the confederation called al-Muntafiq to Iraq four to five hundred years before the time of writing] kein Ereigniss von Wichtigkeit, da die syrische Wüste nur das Vorland der Halbinsel ist. Dasselbe gilt von zwei, in den beiden vorletzten Jahrhunderten stattgefundenen Wanderungen. Einmal zog ein Theil der seit uralten Zeiten im Norden der Halbinsel wohnhaften Aneza-Stämme aus dieser ihrer Heimath in die syrische Wüste; zuerst die Biśr [Bishr] und Hasana, nach ihnen die Wuld ‘Alî und Ruwala; die Ersteren zelten gegenwärtig im Palmyrenischen, die Anderen in der Trachonitis und östlicher. [...] Die andere zugleich letzte Wanderung arabischer Stämme war die der Völkerschaft Gerbâ, eines Zweigs der Schemmar; sie zogen gegen Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts, um den Wahhabiden nicht tributpflichtig zu sein, aus dem Schemmar-Gebirge nach Mesopotamien, wo sie noch jetzt nomadisiren.<sup>73</sup>

In his eyes, only the migratory movements that took place in connection with the Islamic conquest were historically important.<sup>74</sup> Today, many historians of the Middle East no longer share his view.<sup>75</sup> They can still learn from Wetzstein about the importance of paying attention to the less pronounced shifts and drifts that characterised the demographic composition of nomadic groups and their names. As constant as they may have seemed in both lifestyle and manners, the groups and names of the desert people have changed for various reasons:

[...] denn die Stämme verschwinden durch Auswanderung, Krieg, Verschmelzung mit anderen Stämmen, oder wechseln die Namen, was nicht

73 Wetzstein, “Tapferkeit”, p. 392.

74 “Ueberhaupt hat Arabien seit der vorerwähnten, durch den Islam veranlassten allgemeinen Stämmewanderung nicht wieder etwas auch nur annähernd ihr Aehnliches erlebt, [...]” Wetzstein, “Tapferkeit”, p. 393.

75 Albert Hourani, “The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the XVIIth Century”, *Studia Islamica*, 8 (1957), pp. 89–122; for an earlier period, see Astrid Meier and Tariq Tell, “The World the Bedouin Lived in: Climate, Migration and Politics in the Early Modern Arab East”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 58 (2015), pp. 21–55.

selten ist. Seit fünfzig Jahren wird der große Aeneze-Stamm [*sic*] der Wuld 'Alî nach dem Namen seines damaligen Scheichs Zmêr allenthalben nur Benî Zmêr genannt.<sup>76</sup>

The subsequent arrival of various groups belonging to the 'Anaza confederation, such as the Wuld 'Alî and the Ruwala, changed the power relations in these seemingly empty regions.<sup>77</sup> Ottoman sources, Arabic chronicles and travelogues are not particularly revealing about what happened in these places. Tribal histories do tell us a lot about clashes and fights, but they are notoriously difficult to fit into a historical chronology.<sup>78</sup> All the more valuable for historians are descriptions in which Wetzstein makes passing remarks about the use of Bedouin marks (*wasm*). I will quote this passage in full:

In der Ortschaft Merw,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Stunde nördlich von dem in der Geschichte der Kreuzzüge oft genannten Pass bei der Cavea Roob in Nordgilead, stehen auf dem Bruchstücke einer Säule folgende Zeichen [see original for the depiction of the *wesm*], von denen das erste linker Hand den Churshân, das folgende den Tuwaqa, das dritte den Benî Zuheir, das vierte den Atimma gehört; diesen vier Stämmen, welche Zweige der Völkerschaft Sachr sind, ist jenes Dorf Merw tributpflichtig. In der Stadt Bosrâ (dem alten Bostra) stehen an dem sogenannten Windthore (bâb el-hawâ) folgende Zeichen [...], von denen die zwei letzten linker Hand gewaltsam zerstört, wenn auch noch kenntlich sind. Ihre Zerstörung zeigt an, dass ihre Inhaber keine Anrechte mehr auf die Stadt haben. Das erste rechter Hand heisst der Neumond (hilâl) der Beni Schaalân und ist das Wesm der Ruwala, eines grossen Stammes der Aneza; das folgende sind die Stäbe (matârik) der Benî Râschid, eines Zweiges der Sirhân; das vierte sind die zwei Neumonde (hilâlein) der Serdîa, eines jetzt decimierten, aber noch vor 150 Jahren mächtigen Stammes im Süden Haurâns; das fünfte endlich ist die Keule (debbûsa) der Fuheilîa, eines jetzt ebenfalls sehr geschwächten Stammes, dessen Fürst früher (noch Anfangs dieses Jahrhunderts) bei seiner Investitur vertragsmässig eine stählerne, mit eingelegten goldenen Arabesken gezierte Schlachtkeule von der osma-

76 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, 93.

77 See, for example, Bernhard Lucke, Mohammed Shunnaq et al., "Questioning Transjordan's Historic Desertification: A Critical Review of the Paradigm of 'Empty Lands'", *Levant*, 44 (2012) 1, pp. 101–126.

78 See, for example, Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Authority in Tribal Jordan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997.

nischen Regierung erhielt. Er führte den Titel "Fürst der syrischen Nomaden" (emîr Arab es-Schâm), und die Keule, das Symbol der Herrschaft, wurde zum Wesm der Völkerschaft.<sup>79</sup>

Among the most important aspects on which Wetzstein's writings shed new light is the relationship between villages and Bedouin groups. It is difficult to glean such details about the contractual forms of "brotherhood" (*huwwa*) that linked both sides in an exchange of payments (in kind and money) for protection. The often violent nature of this uneasy relationship also becomes evident in Wetzstein's own experiences with "his" villages, Sikkâ and Ġassûla.<sup>80</sup> According to his *Reisebericht*, the well-being of these two villages depended on his personal relationship with the Sheikh of the Banū Şumayr (Wetzstein's Beni Zmer) of the Wuld 'Alî of the 'Anaza, a man called Muḥammad b. al-Dūḥî.<sup>81</sup>

Every year at the end of August this group could be found in the Marğ lands, when the camel herds were pastured on the western side of the lakes on their way out into the desert proper for their winter pastures.<sup>82</sup> For six weeks, there was also a market called "Markt der Bani Zmer" in this region,

der in einem grossartigen Tauschgeschäft zwischen den Beduinen und den Damascener Händlern besteht. Während dieser Zeit leiden die benachbarten Dörfer furchtbar. Zwar verhindert Muhammad offenbare Räubereien seiner Beduinen, aber jedes Dorf hat allabendlich wohl fünfzig und mehr Gäste, die für sich und ihre Pferde Essen und Fütterung (Gerste) verlangen.<sup>83</sup>

Wetzstein details the amounts spent on these so-called avanias and quotes the case of al-Ḥiğāna, a village at the edge of the desert under the control of the Ruwala where they came in May for twelve to twenty days:<sup>84</sup>

[...] im Defter (Communalausgaben-Buch) von Higâne waren diesen Avanien mehrere Jahre hindurch mit 50 bis 55'000 Piastern (gegen 1000

79 Wetzstein, "Über die Arten des arabischen Wesm", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 9 (1877), pp. 14–16, here p. 15.

80 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 2; for how dramatically this changes 1859 and 1860, see Huhn, *Wetzstein*, pp. 237–242.

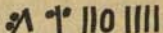
81 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, pp. 140–143; cf. Josias Leslie Porter, *Five Years in Damascus*, two vols., London, John Murray, 1855, vol. 1, pp. 391–392.

82 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 140; see also *ibid.*, p. 34.

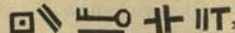
83 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 140.

84 Wetzstein, "Markt", pp. 484–485, note 15.

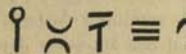
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Bergs an einer geglätteten Felsenwand tief eingegraben die Zeichen 


von denen die beiden äusseren das Wesm zweier Stammzweige der Ghajjât und die beiden mittleren dasjenige zweier Stammzweige der Mezâwida sind; beide Völkerschaften existiren noch; sie gehören zu den Trachoniten. In der Ortschaft Merw,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Stunde nördlich von dem in der Geschichte der Kreuzzüge oft genannten Pass bei der Cavea Roob in Nordgilead, stehen auf dem Bruchstücke einer Säule

folgende Zeichen: , von denen das erste linker Hand den

Churschân, das folgende den Tuwaka, das dritte den Benî Zuheir, das vierte den Atimma gehört; diesen vier Stämmen, welche Zweige der Völkerschaft Sachr sind, ist jenes Dorf Merw tributpflichtig. In der Stadt Bosrâ (dem alten Bostra) stehen an dem sogenannten Windthore (bâb el-hawâ) folgende Zeichen:

, von denen die zwei letzten linker Hand gewaltsam zerstört,

wenn auch noch kenntlich sind. Ihre Zerstörung zeigt an, dass ihre Inhaber keine Anrechte mehr auf die Stadt haben. Das erste rechter Hand heisst der Neumond (hilâl) der Benî Schaalân und ist das Wesm der Ruwala, eines grossen Stammes der Aneza; das folgende sind die Stäbe (matârik) der Benî Râschid, eines Zweiges der Sirhân; das mittlere ist der Krückstock (mâhégâna) der Benî Kâsim, gleichfalls eines Zweiges der Sirhân; das vierte sind die zwei Neumonde (hilâlein) der Serdîa, eines jetzt decimirten, aber noch vor 150 Jahren mächtigen Stammes im Süden Haurâns; das fünfte endlich ist die Keule (debbûsa) der Fuheilîa, eines jetzt ebenfalls sehr geschwächten Stammes, dessen Fürst früher (noch Anfangs dieses Jahrhunderts) bei seiner Investitur vertragsmässig eine stählerne, mit eingelekten goldenen Arabesken gezierte Schlachtkeule von der osmanischen Regierung erhielt. Er führte den Titel „Fürst der syrischen Nomaden“ (emîr Arab es-Schâm), und die Keule, das Symbol der Herrschaft, wurde zum Wesm der Völkerschaft. Auf dem Berge Muntâr bei dem Dorfe El-higâna, 6 Stunden östlich von Damask,

steht auf einem Grabhügel ein Stein mit dem Doppelzeichen . Dasjenige rechter Hand ist das Wesm der Gemâila, das andere der No'eim. Beide Stämme gehören zu den Trachoniten. Zwei befreundete Jünglinge, welche, der eine dieser, der andere jener Völkerschaft angehörend, in einer Stammfehde dort gegen einander kämpften mussten und auf den Tod verwundet wurden, verlangten, in einem Grabe beerdigt zu werden. Das Jägervolk Suleib, welches sich unter den syrischen Nomaden am längsten zum Christenthum bekannte, hat noch heute als Stammesabzeichen das Kreuz. Die Adwân, welche im Osten von Jericho nomadisiren, haben als Wesm den Kaffeebrenner (mâhemâsa, ein grosser eiserner Löffel), das Symbol der Gastfreundschaft; hier gestattet die Art des Wesm einen Schluss auf das Alter der Völkerschaft, denn da der Kaffee erst seit 200 Jahren in Syrien eingeführt ist, so müssen die Adwân ein junger Stamm sein. Auch die Turkmanen-Stämme in Gôlân und bei Haleb haben das Wesm, nur heisst es bei ihnen Tâgh, ein Name, den wir bereits aus den Reisewerken über Turkistan und die nördlicheren Länder turanischer Zunge kennen, denn auch die dortigen Nomadenvölker haben allgemein das Eigenthumszeichen, ohne Zweifel aus den ältesten Zeiten her.

Es wäre also, um auf den Smolensker Granitblock zurückzukommen, nicht unmöglich, dass auch seine Charaktere auf der einen Seite oder geradezu auf beiden Seiten weiter nichts sind, als das Wesm der arabischen, das Tâgh der türkischen Nomadenstämme. Waren die Hippomolgen und Galaktophagen der sarmatischen Steppen, wie nicht

FIGURE 14.1 Page from Wetzstein's "Über die Arten des arabischen Wesm" (1877)

Dukaten) notirt, bis diese Ortschaft darüber zu Grunde ging und vor fünf Jahren von ihren Einwohnern verlassen wurde.<sup>85</sup>

The exaction of tribute by the nomads is often seen as the underlying reason for the abandonment of villages and the cessation of agricultural activities. Recent scholarship, however, has shown that we must be cautious regarding generalisations and that the history of the settlement of the regions on the desert fringes is marked by adaptation and frequent movement.<sup>86</sup> Agricultural activities evidently also depended on market forces, i.e. high grain prices.<sup>87</sup> Yet one can assess the damage caused by Bedouin exactions more realistically by also taking into account the mobility that characterised the life of the so-called sedentary population. This becomes evident not only from looking at Ottoman tax registers and administrative correspondence,<sup>88</sup> but also the descriptions of travellers. Wetzstein himself helped with the publication of the travelogue of the German geologist Alphons Stübel, which included a long chapter on the mobility of the “desert line” and the boundaries of settled life.<sup>89</sup> One of the examples mentioned is al-Ḥiġāna (Higâne): After it had been abandoned in about 1853, according to Wetzstein’s report of 1858, it seems to have been repopulated again by a small number of families as early as 1860, when Wetzstein and Dörgens passed through on their second expedition.<sup>90</sup> Other remarks about abandonment and colonisation may be found in Wetzstein’s collection of Greek and Latin inscriptions.<sup>91</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion

Johann Gottfried Wetzstein had a research programme set out for himself when he came to Damascus in 1849. Even if today’s historians do not share his preoccupations and disagree with his interpretations, depending on the questions

85 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 140.

86 Lucke et al., “Questioning Transjordan’s Historic Desertification”.

87 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 138: “[...] die hohen Getreidepreise colonisieren die verödeten Dörfer, [...]”.

88 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 112.

89 See Guthe (ed.), “Stübels Reise”, pp. 263–266.

90 Dörgens, “Consul Wetzstein’s und R. Dörgens’ Reise”, p. 394; cf. Guthe (ed.), “Stübels Reise”, pp. 263–264.

91 Wetzstein, *Ausgewählte griechische und lateinische Inschriften gesammelt auf Reisen in den Trachonen und um das Haurângebirge*, Berlin, Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1864, *passim*.

they ask, they can find in his material a wealth of remarks and observations that would make it worth their while reading through his articles. One can but encourage new research into his work, including into Wetzstein's unpublished material in the libraries in Berlin, Tübingen and Leipzig.<sup>92</sup> It might be possible to write a contemporary version of the book on language and people that Wetzstein had envisaged when he returned to Berlin in 1862.

A future study of Wetzstein's limited success in terms of an academic career or the impact of his publications would have to address his personality, academic and political interests as well as the evolving field of Oriental studies and the development of a mass market for Orientalia catering to a taste rather different from Wetzstein's writings, as I argued in this article. This small contribution to the volume dedicated to Johann Gottfried Wetzstein will have fulfilled its purpose if it helps renew the interest of the transnational and interdisciplinary scholarly community in his material and his work.

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92 See Huhn, Ingeborg, *Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein in der Handschriftenabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz* [= Kataloge der Handschriftenabteilung, Reihe 2, Nachlässe Bd. 9], Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006.

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## From Leipzig to Damascus

### *Wetzstein as a Broker of Arabic Prints in Syria*

*Boris Liebreuz*

Johann Gottfried Wetzstein had been serving for less than a year as the Prussian consul in Damascus when he sat down on 14 September 1849 and wrote a letter to Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801–1888), professor of Oriental languages in Leipzig. As with so many other of his students, Fleischer had been a diligent patron to Wetzstein; he had facilitated his student's career with written opinions and letters of recommendation to ministries and colleagues. Now his former student kept Fleischer informed about developments in Syria. In this particular letter, after a diatribe against the dire situation of intellectual life in the country, Wetzstein goes on to describe his social life:

My Bayḍāwī is the oracle of the Moslems in dubious cases, and were I enabled to appear with more largesse, my قاعة (assembling hall) would soon be the meeting place for the local notables. As النحوي I am renowned far and wide.<sup>1</sup>

Boastful claims of his own scholarly prowess vis-à-vis his Damascene connections are not scarce in the epistolary exchanges between Wetzstein and the recipients of his letters (the collection of his letters would be a worthwhile undertaking in itself). But it is the reference to Bayḍāwī, which apparently had such a tremendous success with Wetzstein's Damascene guests, that I want to turn to here. For most students of Arabic literature, this is not hard to identify as one of the most prominent texts of Quran scholarship up until this day. It refers to the Quran commentary *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* by the thirteenth-century scholar 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī (d. AH 685/1286, AH 692/1293 or

1 Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Ny kgl. Sam. 2969–4<sup>o</sup>, Fleischer estate, Wetzstein to Fleischer, Damascus, 14 September 1849: "Mein Beidhawi ist das Orakel der Moslemen in zweifelhaften Fällen, und wäre ich hier in den Stand gesetzt, mit Glanz aufzutreten, so würde meine قاعة (Versammlungssaal) bald der Versammlungsort der hiesigen Notabilitäten sein. Als النحوي bin ich allenthalben bekannt."

AH716/1316). But it was no ordinary book in the eyes of the letter's recipient. This was no less than the central achievement in the editorial output of one of the defining characters in European Arabic studies.<sup>2</sup> The two volumes had appeared in Leipzig in the years 1846–1848, just prior to Wetzstein's assumption of his consular post. He would be sure to please when he informed Fleischer that the latter's edition was met with interest and even admiration in one of the centres of traditional Muslim Arabic scholarship.

This episode, I hope, will offer some valuable insights into the fate of printed books within a cultural and scholarly setting that was just beginning to experience and accept this technique on a larger scale. This is because what was certainly envisioned as no more than a flattering remark about the reception of Fleischer's major editorial work, also allowing Wetzstein to boast about his own grammatical skills and achievements in the eyes of his revered teacher, would soon have unforeseen consequences for the consul and set in motion an affair which must have caused him no small trouble for no less than the next fifteen years.

Fleischer did not simply take this note as a compliment, but viewed it as a business opportunity. Upon receiving the letter on 9 October 1849, he marked the passage and a few days later added in a marginal note that he had informed his publisher, Vogel, about the possibility of finding a new market for the edition in Syria.<sup>3</sup> It is well-known that Wetzstein was responsible for an enormous number of mostly manuscript books finding their way from Damascus to several German libraries. Much less known is the fact that at the same time, albeit on a much smaller scale, he also tried to instigate a flow of books in the other direction.

Did the Syrian republic of letters, and more specifically the scholarly community of Damascus, need this book? To attempt an answer, it is necessary to take a short look at the Bayḍāwī manuscripts from Damascus.

2 See Boris Liebrecht, "Fleischers Lebenswerk", in *Ein Garten im Ärmel: Islamische Buchkultur*, ed. Verena Klemm, Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 2008, p. 63.

3 The marginal remark by Fleischer on this letter reads: "Davon Herrn Vogel Nachricht gegeben, d[ur]ch Billet v. 13. Oct. und ihn nach Vermittlung einigen Vertriebs des Beidhawi nach Syrien d[ur]ch Reuter(?) und Nossbach hingewiesen."

## 1 Bayḍāwī Manuscripts, Their Users and Public Libraries

The *Anwār al-tanzīl* by Bayḍāwī is considered one of the most successful examples of Sunnī Quran exegesis. Scholars have also pointed out long ago that the work relies heavily on the *Kaššāf* by Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamaḥṣārī (d. AH 538/1143–1144), to the point that many see in it little more than an abridgement of the latter, with Bayḍāwī’s *Anwār* essentially omitting the problematic ideological leaning of the Mu‘tazilite author Zamaḥṣārī, while also adding some corrections. A vast number of manuscripts attest to this success in a general manner. However, no comprehensive survey of these manuscripts exists, to my knowledge, making any specific comments about its historical reception tantamount to guesswork.<sup>4</sup>

In lieu of such a survey, I undertook to find all the manuscripts of the work among the books Wetzstein bought in Damascus, as well as those still preserved in the city’s former Zāhiriyya and now Asad library, in addition to what I know from historical endowment deeds and library catalogues about the holdings of the large public libraries of Damascus. Surprisingly, Wetzstein himself bought only one fragment of the work, MS Berlin Wetzstein 11 1280. Then again, his collections are overall quite weak on the topic of Quran commentaries, so this might have been a personal predilection rather than an indication of the work’s general availability.

The catalogue of the Zāhiriyya library, on the other hand, could serve as a window into the question since it holds all those manuscripts collected in the nineteenth century from Damascene endowed libraries. Indeed, the list of manuscripts of the work goes on for many pages and includes manuscripts copied in different places between AH 837 and AH 1204. The catalogue takes note of a great number of endowment deeds pertaining to institutions from Jerusalem through Ṣaydā and Tripoli to Aleppo, but ultimately ending up in Damascus.<sup>5</sup> That, however, does not mean the *Anwār al-tanzīl* would have been available to just anyone. Mostly we find fragments of the same set of multi-

4 See the tentative inventory of scholarship on Bayḍāwī-manuscripts by Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche, “An Early Manuscript of al-Bayḍāwī’s *Anwār al-tanzīl* and the Model It Has Been Copied From”, in *From Codicology to Technology: Islamic Manuscripts and Their Place in Scholarship*, ed. Stefanie Brinkmann and Beate Wiesmüller, Berlin, Frank und Timme, 2009, pp. 33–45. Quiring-Zoche notably also treats a manuscript produced in Damascus that happens to be also the earliest one on record; this, however, came to be endowed in a town in modern Turkey.

5 See Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥaymī, *Fihris maḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhiriyya: ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān al-karīm*, vol. 111: *al-Taḥsīn*, Damascus, Maḡma‘ al-Luḡa al-‘Arabiyya bi-Dimašq, 1984, pp. 24–55.

volume copies of the work and if we look at the holdings of great endowed libraries of the town, we mostly look in vain.

Of the great Damascene endowments attached to institutions of learning and worship that could guarantee some limited access to a select group of readers, I could identify it in two of the libraries established by governors of the ‘Azm family. In the first instance, it was As‘ad Bāšā al-‘Azm (d. AH 1171/1758) who gave it to the library he was to establish in the – initially Baydāwī-less – madrasa of his father Ismā‘īl Bāšā al-‘Azm on its foundation in AH 1165/1752.<sup>6</sup> Sulaymān Bāšā al-‘Azm’s (d. AH 1156/1743) *waqf*-document from AH 1151/1738,<sup>7</sup> on the other hand, does not list a copy of the work. But the endowed books of a certain ‘Uṭmān al-Kurdī,<sup>8</sup> which were stored in the governor’s madrasa, contained a three-volume copy.<sup>9</sup> As a mid-nineteenth-century addition to that very library, a scholar would give another copy in AH 1247/1831–1832.<sup>10</sup> A multi-volume set found its way into the otherwise rather obscure library of the Yāgūšīyya madrasa,<sup>11</sup> of which not much is known beyond the fact that it had a salaried librarian in AH 1151/1738<sup>12</sup> and that eleven volumes were transferred from there to the Zāhiriyya library at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The

6 MS Zāhiriyya 450 – tafsīr (54); see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. III: *al-Tafsīr*, p. 42.

7 Brigitte Marino, “Les investissements de Sulaymān Pacha al-‘Azm à Damas”, *Annales Islamologiques*, 34 (2000), pp. 209–226, here p. 217; ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān, *Munādamat al-aṭlāl wa-musāmarat al-ḥayāl*, ed. M.Z. al-Šawīš, Damascus, s.d., p. 266.

8 See on this as yet unidentified personality who, judging by the dates of his donated manuscripts must have lived in the eighteenth–nineteenth century, Boris Liebreinz, *Die Rifā‘īya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2016, p. 143. Most of these books have stayed in the Zāhiriyya, but cf. some other manuscripts from this endowment now outside Damascus: Riyad King Saud University 3642, Princeton Garrett no. 191Y, Garrett no. 416Y and Garrett no. 730Y, four grammatical commentaries; the mystical poem Princeton Third Series no. 181; the *šāfi‘ite* judicial work Munich Cod. arab. 1650; Tokio Daiber II 71, an epistle on Sufism; Beirut AUB MS 892.7108 NgghaA, a work on wine poetry.

9 The copy is made up of three independent fragments, MSS Zāhiriyya 419–421 – tafsīr (46–48); see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. III: *al-Tafsīr*, pp. 26–28.

10 It was in AH 1247/1831–1832 that Muḥammad, the imam of the Ġāmi‘ al-Aqṣāb, donated MS Zāhiriyya 418 – tafsīr (45) to the Madrasa of Sulaymān Bāšā al-‘Azm; see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. III, *al-Tafsīr*, pp. 24–25.

11 MS Zāhiriyya 422–436 – tafsīr (49); see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. III, *al-Tafsīr*, pp. 28–38.

12 Muḥannad Aḥmad Sālim al-Mubayyaḍīn, *Ahl al-qalam wa-dawruhum fī l-ḥayāt al-ṭaqāfiyya fī madīnat Dīmašq ḥilāla l-fatra 1121–1172 h / 1708–1757 m*, Beirut, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, 2005, p. 185.

13 Ḥabīb Zayyāt, *Ḥazā’in al-kutub fī Dīmašq wa-dawāḥihā*, Cairo, Maṭba‘at al-Ma‘ārif, 1902, pp. 11–12.

work was to be found in the private library of ‘Abd al-Ġanī al-Nābulusī, the first volume copied in his own hand, and might have been transferred to the semi-public library established at his grave.<sup>14</sup> It was definitely found there later on as a certain Sulaymān endowed the work to this library at an undisclosed date.<sup>15</sup>

Closer to Wetzstein’s time, another Damascene scholar, Qāsim Daqqāq al-Dūda (d. c. AH1260/1844), endowed the *Anwār* for his own family’s use in AH1248/1832.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, our understanding of the geography of Damascene libraries and their holdings is too sketchy at the moment to allow us to arrive at meaningful statistical conclusions. But as an anecdotal observation, the Bayḍāwī was notably absent from the Rifā‘iyya-library, now in Leipzig and also from Wetzstein’s acquisitions, the only collection which contemporary holdings in the mid-nineteenth century we can chart with security and which can thus serve as a small window into the world of Damascene books.<sup>17</sup>

What the Rifā‘iyya did hold, however, was a seven-volume set of the work that the *Anwār al-tanzīl* set out to supersede, the *Kaššāf* by al-Zamaḥṣarī (Vollers 86–92). This is an interesting side note that probably holds more significance. Because, as the story goes, the *Kaššāf* was written by a potentially suspicious Mu‘tazilī author and Bayḍāwī’s abridgement was supposedly not only handier, but also cleansed of controversial passages. But, while it could be assumed that Bayḍāwī’s work, as the shorter and ideologically safer version, would be the preferred choice, it is in fact the earlier text that one could find in the Rifā‘iyya as well as the large ‘Azm donations<sup>18</sup> and the famous al-‘Umariyya madrasa<sup>19</sup> in Šālihiyya. This would make it one of only five texts to be found in

14 ‘Abd al-Maġīd Ša‘bān, “Amlāk al-šayḥ ‘Abd al-Ġanī al-Nābulusī wa-maktabatuhū fi waṭā‘iq maḥākim Dimašq al-šar‘iyya”, *al-Maġalla al-Tāriḥiyya al-‘Arabīyya li-l-Dirāsāt al-Uṭmāniyya*, 36 (2007), pp. 165–184, here p. 174, lines 16–17, and p. 177, line 2.

15 MS Zāhiriyya 9093; see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. 111, *al-Taḥsīn*, p. 53.

16 MS Zāhiriyya 593 – tafsīr (155); see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. 111, *al-Taḥsīn*, pp. 43–44. For Qāsim’s biography, see Muḥammad Ġamīl al-Šaṭṭī, *A‘yān Dimašq fi l-qarn al-tālīt ‘ašar wa-niṣf al-qarn al-rābi‘ ‘ašar*, 1201–1350 h, s.l., al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1972 (2nd edition), pp. 224–225.

17 See Boris Liebrecht, “Die Rifā‘iyya: Neue Forschungen zur Geschichte einer Familienbibliothek aus dem osmanischen Damaskus”, in *Das Buch in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Sonderbestände der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig*, ed. Thomas Fuchs, Christoph Mackert and Reinhold Scholl, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2012, pp. 265–279; Liebrecht, *Die Rifā‘iyya aus Damaskus*.

18 As‘ad Bāšā al-‘Azm to the Madrasa of his father Ismā‘īl MS Zāhiriyya 497 – tafsīr 101 and 498 – tafsīr 102 (Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. 111: *al-Taḥsīn*, pp. 370–371); Muḥammad Bāšā al-‘Azm (d. AH1197/1783) in 1190, MS Zāhiriyya 496 – tafsīr 100 (Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. 111: *al-Taḥsīn*, p. 370).

19 MS Zāhiriyya 7048; see Ḥaymī, *‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān al-karīm*, vol. 111: *al-Taḥsīn*, p. 374.

all of these libraries.<sup>20</sup> Bayḍāwī's work was certainly well represented in many Damascene collections but it had not replaced Zamaḥṣārī's base text.

Other manuscripts catalogued in other collections may reveal the presence of copies of the *Anwār* in even more of the libraries mentioned. But I believe this small survey, as a first impression, to be a useful compass pointing to possible reasons for why Wetzstein's Bayḍāwī, all hyperbole aside, could actually have been "the oracle of the Moslems" in Damascus. Unlike many of the manuscripts mentioned already, Wetzstein's printed edition was complete and was available in the collection of a man who made it a point to be approachable by the city's notables, a collection moreover that did not rely on circumscribed opening hours. What it tells us is that another complete copy of the Bayḍāwī to be consulted beyond the restrictions of the usual mosque and madrasa libraries was probably most welcome, especially as it was in the hands of a consul, and regardless of the fact that this special copy was not handwritten but printed. In fact, a printed book was still an unusual sight in Damascus and would not have failed to attract some attention among its scholars.

## 2 Printed Books in a Manuscript Culture

Until well into the nineteenth century, serious Arabic-language printing in the Syrian lands/Bilād al-Šām was primarily a phenomenon of the coastal areas in what is today's Lebanon. Church authorities from the seventeenth century onwards furthered several projects to print what were mostly liturgical and spiritual works as a means of disseminating these and controlling the texts that their communities had access to.<sup>21</sup> It is fair to assume that Wetzstein's learned Muslim acquaintances in Damascus would generally have no use for these books. In Damascus itself, the first short-lived Arabic press is recorded as late as 1860. Owned by the Christian Ḥannā al-Dūmānī, it reportedly produced no more than two known Christian works in ten years.<sup>22</sup>

20 Besides the *Kaššāf*, these would be the biography of the prophet by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, al-Suyūṭī's primer of Qur'ān sciences *al-Itqān*, the *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* of al-Ġazālī, and the canonical *ḥadīṭ* collection *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Buḥārī.

21 Carsten-Michael Walbiner, "Die Protagonisten des frühen Buchdrucks in der arabischen Welt", in *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorderen Orient*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph, Dortmund, Verlag für Orientkunde, 2002, pp. 128–141.

22 Dagmar Glass, "Die *nahḍa* und ihre Technik im 19. Jahrhundert: Arabische Druckereien in Ägypten und Syrien", in *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorderen Orient*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph, Dortmund, Verlag für Orientkunde, 2002, pp. 50–84, here p. 65.

Muslim Damascene book culture in Arabic during the years of Wetzstein's term as consul was very much a manuscript culture. The large numbers of printed books sent to the East from Italian, French or English presses were for the most part biblical and other Christian doctrinal works intended for Christian communities only. In the – presumably rare – cases that Syrian Muslim readers of Arabic encountered printed books up until well into the second half of the nineteenth century, these books would usually have been imported. Already in the eighteenth century this could have been from the Ottoman imperial centre, where the famous enterprise of Ibrāhīm Müteferrika, founded in 1727, produced from 1729 twenty-four works of secular learning until the end of the century.<sup>23</sup> These covered decidedly non-theological topics, such as dictionaries, and historical and geographical texts. It was expressly forbidden, on the other hand, to print Arabic texts of religious learning. From the nineteenth century onwards, it was increasingly Egypt, with its state-sponsored press at Būlāq, founded in 1822, which produced and exported the bulk of Arabic printed books.<sup>24</sup>

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, most printing in the Arabic script, in number of texts as well as in volume, was done outside of the Arabic-speaking lands, especially in European centres of Oriental scholarship. It was a laborious and costly undertaking for a very small market or rather a circle of like-minded scholarly readers, mostly trained theologians and a growing number of researchers with a broader interest in culture and history.<sup>25</sup> And from

23 Orlin Sabev, "The First Ottoman Turkish Printing Enterprise: Success or Failure?", in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi, London, I.B. Tauris, 2007, pp. 63–89; Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Hatice Aynur, "The Birth of the Tradition of Printed Books in the Ottoman Empire: Transition from Manuscript to Print (1729–1848)", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 24 (2007), pp. 165–196; Maurits van den Boogert, "The Sultan's Answer to the Medici Press? Ibrahim Müteferrika's Printing House in Istanbul", in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, Maurits H. van den Boogert and Bart Westerweel, Leiden, Brill, 2005, pp. 265–293; Yasemin Gencer, "Ibrahim Müteferrika and the Age of the Printed Manuscript", in *The Islamic Manuscript Tradition: Ten Centuries of Book Arts in Indiana University Collections*, ed. Christiane Gruber, Bloomington/Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, pp. 155–193; on early printing in Istanbul beyond the Arabic script, see Nil Pektaş, "The Beginnings of Printing in the Ottoman Capital: Book Production and Circulation in Early Modern Istanbul", *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları*, xvi/2 (2015), pp. 3–32.

24 On the output of early Egyptian printing presses in general, see Cheng-Hsiang Hsu, "A Survey of Arabic-Character Publications Printed in Egypt during the Period of 1238–1267 (1822–1851)", in *History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East*, ed. Philip Sadgrove, = *Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement*, 15 (2004), pp. 1–16.

25 Geoffrey Roper, "Early Arabic Printing in Europe", in *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die*

the evidence of some failed attempts to export these books to the East, most notably the famous Venice Quran edition of 1537 or 38,<sup>26</sup> it was usually assumed that the products of European presses were outright rejected for different reasons.<sup>27</sup>

These same reasons are also invoked to explain the late introduction of Arabic printing with moveable type as a general phenomenon in all those parts of the world where Arabic script was in primary usage. Reservations about such technology, or the outright rejection of it, would be on religious and aesthetic grounds. Specifically, the correct transmission of texts in traditional forms of Islamic scholarship gave prime emphasis to oral modes of teaching. This reasoning evidently holds true only for texts from the religious curriculum, but it would certainly apply to an edition of Bayḍāwī's Quran commentary.

Beyond religious factors, aesthetic reasoning would point out that the available types used to produce Arabic texts looked comparatively clumsy and could not compete with even an average book hand, let alone the more elaborate products of calligraphy. One could even say that the Arabic script was generally unfit for printing with the technical means then available since the joints of connected letters could hardly be achieved without perceptible lacunae even with the greatest of diligence.

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*Druckrevolution: Eine interkulturelle Begegnung / Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross Cultural Encounter*, ed. Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper, Westhofen, wva, 2002, pp. 129–150; Boris Liebreinz, "Früher Druck mit arabischen Typen in Leipzig, 17.–18. Jahrhundert", in *Historical Aspects of Printing and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East: Papers from the Symposium at the University of Leipzig, September 2008*, ed. Geoffrey Roper, Leiden, Brill, 2014, pp. 17–52.

26 Hartmut Bobzin, "Von Venedig nach Kairo: Zur Geschichte arabischer Korandrucke (16. bis frühes 20. Jahrhundert) / From Venice to Cairo: On the History of Arabic Editions of the Koran (16th–Early 20th Century)", in *Sprachen des Nahen Ostens und die Druckrevolution: Eine interkulturelle Begegnung / Middle Eastern Languages and the Print Revolution: A Cross Cultural Encounter*, ed. Eva Hanebutt-Benz, Dagmar Glass and Geoffrey Roper, Westhofen, wva, 2002, pp. 151–176.

27 This assumption has recently been challenged for the centre of the empire, most noteworthy in many contributions by Orlin Sabev, among them most recently "Waiting for Godot: The Formation of Ottoman Print Culture", in *Historical Aspects of Printing and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East: Papers from the Symposium at the University of Leipzig, September 2008*, ed. Geoffrey Roper, Leiden, Brill, 2014, pp. 101–120. A critical survey of the prevalent reasoning in Lutz Berger, "Zur Problematik der späten Einführung des Buchdrucks in der islamischen Welt", in *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorderen Orient*, ed. Ulrich Marzolph, Dortmund, Verlag für Orientkunde, 2002, pp. 15–28. A short but insightful discussion of the perception of printing by various populations in the Ottoman empire can be found in Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds*, New York, NY, Hill and Wang, 2006, pp. 122–124.

Nonetheless, it has to be pointed out that printed Arabic books from Europe and the Müteferrika press must have been in circulation in the Ottoman Empire in general and also in Syria even prior to the mid-nineteenth century. As early as the middle of the eighteenth century, the Russells, two Scottish brothers in charge of the medical care of the British merchant colony in Aleppo, pointed out in their marvellous *Natural History of Aleppo* that the local physicians relied heavily on Avicenna's (Ibn Sīnā's) *Canon* or *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* and used the text of the widely available Roman edition, i.e. the 1593 printing of the Medici press.<sup>28</sup> A request for a copy of the printed book to be sent to Syria can be found in an Arabic letter, datable to the 1630s, from Aleppo by the copyist and bookseller Darwīš Aḥmad to the Arabist Jacob Golius (1596–1667) in Leiden.<sup>29</sup> And a copy now preserved in Sofia does indeed bear traces of this use in the Arabic marks some Ottoman owners have left on its title page, only in this case these were not those of physicians but of high-standing religious scholars. Besides a judge of Galata, we find no less than the later *ṣayḥ al-islām* 'Āṣim Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad Ġalabī-zāde (d. AH 1173/1760).<sup>30</sup> The extent of this reception cannot be outlined here, however, due to the lack of available surveys. To that end, it would be worthwhile checking all the old printed works, especially the products of the Müteferrika press available in the libraries of the region.

28 Alexander Russell/Patrick Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo*, 2 vols. London, Robinson, 1794 (2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 121: "few of them are tolerably versed in the canon of Avicenna, though manuscripts of that work are far from being scarce at Aleppo, and the printed Roman editions are very common."

29 The letter is summarised in Jan Schmidt, "An Ostrich Egg for Golius: The Heyman Papers Preserved in the Leiden and Manchester University Libraries and Early-Modern Contacts Between the Netherlands and the Middle East", in *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History and Orientalism (1500–1923)*, vol. 11: *Orientalists, Travellers and Merchants in the Ottoman Empire: Political Relations Between Europe and the Porte*, Istanbul, The ISIS Press, 2002, pp. 9–74, here p. 32. I interpret what Schmidt renders as "a printed law code (*qānūn*)" to be the Rome edition.

30 See, with further literature, Henning Sievert, *Zwischen arabischer Provinz und Hoher Pforte: Beziehungen, Bildung und Politik des osmanischen Bürokraten Rāḡīb Mehmed Paşa*, Würzburg, Ergon, 2008, pp. 156–164, 334 (on his book gifts to Rāḡīb Paşa), 522. See for an image of the title page of his copy Stojanka Kenderova/Zorka Ivanova, *From the Collections of Ottoman Libraries in Bulgaria during the 18th–19th Centuries*, Sofia, 1999, p. 95, 126–127 (I owe knowledge of this copy to a lecture by Geoffrey Roper, Cambridge, who also kindly provided me with the bibliographical data).

### 3 The Fate of the Leipzig Prints

This is the environment into which a first stack of printed books from Leipzig were sent and which must have arrived sometime in the years 1850 to 1851.

After Fleischer took Wetzstein's note as an opportunity to appeal to his publisher to conquer the Syrian book market, the subject never recurs in the surviving correspondence between the consul and his teacher. But there are several documents in the consul's estate that shed some light on what happened to the books – in particular, an invoice to the military commander of the province, *ser'asker* Emîn Pasha; a receipt from Anṭūn Būlād who had borrowed a copy of the Bayḍāwī; and several letters between the publisher Vogel in Leipzig and then his heirs requesting information and payment, and Wetzstein justifying his failure to sell all the books.

These documents allow us to outline the following picture. There must have been several shipments, and therefore the total number of volumes shipped is uncertain. Some books must have arrived in or before 1851 since the first invoice for Emîn Pasha is dated 17 April 1851. (In a sad side note the Pasha was not to enjoy his books for long since he died in battle in the autumn of that very year.<sup>31</sup>) Of course, Wetzstein could have sold his own personal copy. But we know he had more of them since the same year, and after Emîn Pasha's purchase, on October 16, the Greek Catholic priest Anṭūn Būlād signed a receipt acknowledging his borrowing of Bayḍāwī volumes from Wetzstein (fig. 15.1).<sup>32</sup>

Then, Vogel shipped a large package of thirteen Bayḍāwīs and four volumes of another Arabic edition that had just appeared in his house, Friedrich August Arnold's (1812–1869) *Mu'allaqāt*, a collection of seven famous pre-Islamic poems.<sup>33</sup> We only learn of this from a letter penned in 1856, in which the publisher Vogel inquired about the "fate of my shipment of books from June 1852".<sup>34</sup> The consul replies that he had received twelve of the thirteen Bayḍāwīs (one was taken as customs duty) and four copies of the *Mu'allaqāt*.<sup>35</sup> Later we learn

31 *Allgemeine Zeitung München*, Nr. 316, 11 November 1852, S. 5017.

32 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein II – Kasten 13 A, *Konsulat: I Datierte Schreiben, 1851 1+2, an Wetzstein*, Tišrīn II 16, 1851.

33 *Septem Mo'allaqāt: Carmina antiquissima Arabum*, ed. Friedrich August Arnold, Leipzig, Vogel, 1850.

34 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Vogel an Wetzstein*, Leipzig, 1 December 1856: "dem Schicksale meiner Büchersendung vom 10 Juni 1852".

35 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein to Vogel, undated draft letter attached to the letter Vogel to Wetzstein*, Leipzig, 1 December 1856.

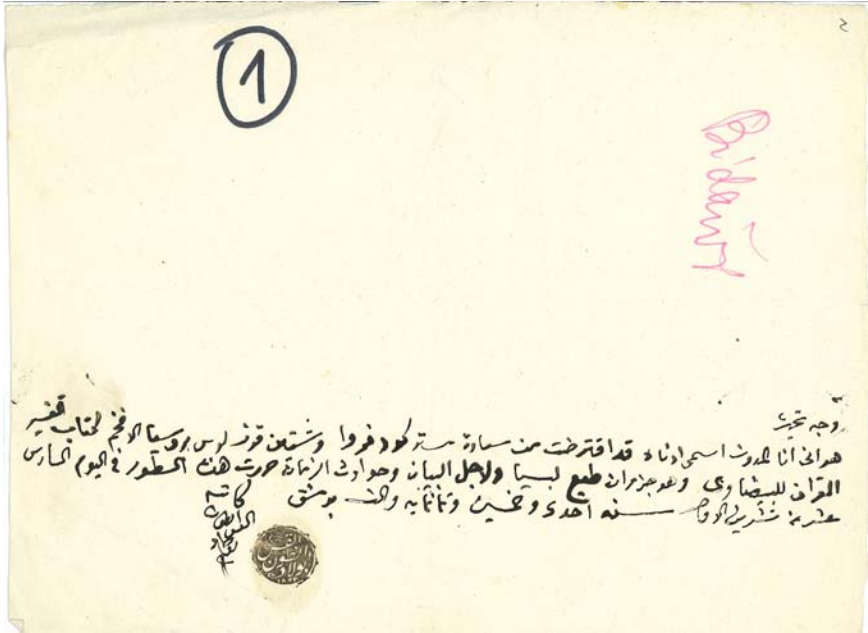


FIGURE 15.1 An das K.pr. Konsulat gerichtete Schreiben (arab.), 1851, Nr. 2: Schreiben Anṭūn Būlād an Wetzstein 16. Tišrīn I / Oktober 1851  
STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN – PK, HANDSCHRIFTENABTEILUNG,  
NACHLASS WETZSTEIN II, KASTEN 13, A

that Wetzstein, in 1860, owed the price of nine Bayḍāwīs – a sum of 132 *Reichsthaler* – for this shipment.<sup>36</sup> In the same draft letter the number of unsold volumes is given as six, while we hear of seven at the time Wetzstein left Syria in 1863,<sup>37</sup> meaning that he was probably resupplied with more copies in between. And in 1863 the heir of the Vogel publishing house found in his papers notes referring to “several large shipments of Bayḍāwīs which you had ordered”,<sup>38</sup> the last one consisting of nine volumes.

While the main merchandise appears to have been Fleischer’s Bayḍāwī-edition, at least two other works were also shipped to Syria. There is the edition by Arnold of the *Mu‘allaqāt*. This comparatively small work, dedicated by its

36 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Vogel an Wetzstein*, Leipzig, 2 June 1860.

37 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein an Vogel*, Berlin, 14 April 1868.

38 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Vogel an Wetzstein*, Leipzig, 14 February 1863.

author to Fleischer, was fresh from the press in 1850. We never hear anything about the (at least) four copies of this work, apart from the fact that these four were included in the shipment of June 1852. Another work we encounter in Syria is Gustav Flügel's (1802–1870) Quran concordance,<sup>39</sup> which, again, was sold to Emîn Pasha. Notably, this last work was not issued by Vogel's publishing house but by his Leipzig colleague Tauchnitz (Fig. 15.2).

Being now apparently well-stocked with printed books, Wetzstein essentially had three options when it came to selling them: auctions, which were traditionally held at the Umayyad mosque; direct sale to, or barter with, personal acquaintances of the consul, such as, in all probability, Emîn Pasha; and a local distribution network of merchants.

That the book was brought to auction is indeed mentioned by Wetzstein. This happened at least twice. The first instance is described in a draft letter written in 1860, in which Wetzstein informs the publisher that he had tried to auction off one volume but bidding did not go beyond 150 piasters, a sum that would not even cover the cost of its importation.<sup>40</sup> The second instance is documented on his return to Germany in 1863 when seven volumes were still unsold and four of them are left to Wetzstein's successor for auction. Success was again very limited, however, and the price offered for a volume never rose above half its actual price as demanded by the publisher.<sup>41</sup>

Among the book merchants was probably Anṭūn Būlād (1794–1871).<sup>42</sup> He left a receipt for borrowing<sup>43</sup> the two Bayḍāwī volumes at one point; this might have been to inspect it and evaluate its marketability. Būlād was a Greek Catholic

39 Gustav Flügel, *Concordantiae Corani arabicae = Nuḡūm al-furqān fi aṭraf al-Qur'ān*, Leipzig, Tauchnitz, 1842.

40 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, undated draft letter Wetzstein to Vogel, attached to the letter Vogel to Wetzstein*, Leipzig, 2 July 1860.

41 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein to Vogel*, Berlin, 14 April 1868.

42 The most comprehensive biography in Tawfiq Yūsuf Būlād, *Tārīḥ al-funūn wa-l-ṣinā'at al-dimašqīyya*, translated from the French by Ilyās Būlād, Damascus, Alif Bā', 2003, pp. 222–227 (I thank Prof. Kristina Richardson for providing access to this rare publication); cf. additionally Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 5 vols., Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1949, vol. III, pp. 290–291; Ḥayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām: Qāmūs tarāḡīm li-ašhar al-riḡāl wa-l-nisā' min al-'arab wa-l-musta'ribīn wa-l-mustašriqīn*, 8 vols. Beirut, Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 2002, vol. II, p. 26; George Saliba, "The Mysterious Provenance of Banū Mūsā's Treatise on Music", in *Allah's Automata: Artifacts of the Arab-Islamic Renaissance (800–1200)*, ed. Siegfried Zielinski and Peter Weibel, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz, 2015, pp. 58–64, here pp. 59–62.

43 Strangely, he used the verb *iqṭaraḍa* instead of the common term *ista'āra*.



priest at a Lebanese convent but spent much, if not most, of his time in Damascus, where he was heavily involved in trade and served many foreign visitors of the city as a source of information, antiquities and books. As such, he was commissioned by the British Arabist Theodore Preston<sup>44</sup> to acquire an endowed library, the Rifā'iyya, a commission that eventually pitted him against Wetzstein, who would prevail and secure the collection for Leipzig in 1853. Whether or not any hard feelings arose on account of this professional rivalry is not known. But the men's relations seem to have been cordial at the time Būlād borrowed the Bayḍāwī volumes. These were the years when Wetzstein mentioned Būlād in letters as a source of information, perused and copied a work of history penned by the priest, and upon his first visit home received a manuscript present dedicated "as a souvenir on his return from the East".<sup>45</sup> There were plans for a serious textile business venture between the two men as well. Būlād acted as a kind of agent and advertiser for his family's weaving enterprise and sent information about their merchandise and business to Wetzstein, who in turn tried to find takers for the products of his native country's cloth manufacturers.<sup>46</sup> So the sale of imported printed books is perfectly in line with the kind of business-oriented relationship the men had, although we do not know whether the priest ever managed to successfully find a buyer for Wetzstein's merchandise.

Another man explicitly mentioned in the letters was Murād Fārḥī, scion of a famous family of Jewish traders, administrators and bankers.<sup>47</sup> He was the official importer of the books in Beirut. Wetzstein used his services on other occasions to cash letters of exchange, most notably when the state of Saxony had to pay for the Rifā'iyya library, and to import merchandise from Germany. Any role beyond that of a nominal importer of the merchandise, however, is not made explicit.

The consul was still sitting on a considerable number of the books at the time of his return to Berlin. Of the seven unclaimed volumes, he left four to his successor for auction in Damascus – though these never yielded more than half their nominal value – and tried to barter the remaining three on a stop

44 See, on the elusive Preston, Geoffrey Roper, "Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire", *Libraries and Culture*, 33 (1998), pp. 233–248, here p. 246.

45 MS Berlin Wetzstein I 183, fol. iv (*tiḍkāran 'inda iyābihi min al-šarq*).

46 See the letter in SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein II, Kasten 13 A, *Kon-sulat: I Datierte Schreiben, 1851 1+2, an Wetzstein* 18. Tišrīn I 1851.

47 For the history of this family, see Julie D. Bouchain, *Juden in Syrien: Aufstieg und Niedergang der Familie Farhi von 1740 bis 1995*, Münster, Lit, 1996; Thomas Philipp, "The Farhi Family and the Changing Position of Jews in Syria 1750–1860", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1984), pp. 37–52.

in Alexandria for local Egyptian prints, which proved successful with two.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, that number meant Wetzstein was essentially able to find takers for most of them. Contrary to his expectations, though, this was mostly through barter, gift and donation. But, regardless of the way they got hold of the book, who were these takers? We do not know much about the people or institutions that ended up with a copy of one of the works. The initial letter to Fleischer spoke of the admiration of the local Muslim notables, but what we have encountered so far are local Jewish and Christian traders.

Closer to the label of local Muslim notable is the already mentioned head of the Ottoman troops in the region, Emîn Pasha. However, the officer, who served in Damascus between 1849 and his death in battle in 1851, was more likely to be a foreigner to the country of Turkish or European origin.<sup>49</sup> There was also the governor of Damascus who, Wetzstein tells us, was the only one to pay in cash the full price of the work.<sup>50</sup> But he fails to say when that was and we are thus left without a name. I would not exclude the possibility that the man labelled as governor was in fact Emîn Pasha, whom Wetzstein called in a much later publication “the military and civil governor”.<sup>51</sup> Although the book was probably not sold at auction, it was at least presented there and since the place for book auctions in Damascus was traditionally the Umayyad mosque, to which non-Muslims usually had no access,<sup>52</sup> we see here the only vague attestation of local Muslim interest in the book.

As noted, Wetzstein also gave these works as gifts or in return for other books. Here again, we are left without specifics, with one remarkable exception which we owe to Anṭūn Būlād. When not busy promoting his family’s weaving atelier and courting European travellers, he was actually a priest at the monastery Dayr al-Muḥalliṣ, close to Ṣaydā in modern Lebanon. More specifically, he was the convent’s librarian and cared for its stock by donating a number of his own books to it as a *waqf*.<sup>53</sup> The monastery was looted by local Druze in 1860 during

48 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein an Vogel*, Berlin, 14 April 1868.

49 On him, see Wetzstein’s posthumous evaluation as “a formidable civil servant (einen ganz vortrefflichen Beamten)” in Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, *Reisebericht über den Hauran und die Trachonen*, Berlin, Verlag von Dietrich Reimer, 1860, p. 112; Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1989, p. 82, 119.

50 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein an Vogel*, Berlin, 14 April 1868.

51 Wetzstein, *Reisebericht*, p. 112: “Militair- und Civil-Gouverneur”.

52 See Liebrecht, *Die Rifāʿiya aus Damaskus*, pp. 260–280.

53 Some of these volumes are now preserved in the library of the American University of

the great massacres perpetrated against Christians in the region, most notably in Damascus, where Wetzstein played such an important role in protecting civilian refugees. During these events, the library was also lost. In an attempt to reclaim at least some of what was stolen, Būlād authored a description of the library and a partial catalogue he intended to publish in print, now preserved in Dayr al-Šurfa monastery (fig. 15.3). This catalogue sometimes explicitly notes the benefactors of the collection, such as Colonel Charles Henry Churchill (1807–1869),<sup>54</sup> the famous biographer of North African resistance fighter and now émigré ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā’irī (1808–1883). We also find a printed copy of al-Bayḍāwī donated by Wetzstein.<sup>55</sup>

It would be worthwhile checking surviving copies in the region for traces of their possessors and readers. With the Bayḍāwī sold to the Ottoman general in 1851, the one loaned to Būlād, the thirteen and then nine attested in the two shipments explicitly mentioned by Vogel, an unspecified number in presumably more shipments, and the fact that Wetzstein took home only one of them, we have a number of at least twenty-three Bayḍāwīs that could have stayed in the East. Assuming that not all of them perished and not all were given to other Europeans who might have brought them back home again, there should still be a considerable number of copies of Fleischer’s work to be found in the region. To this we have to add at least four volumes of the *Mu‘allaqāt* in Arnold’s edition and probably not more than one volume of Flügel’s Quran concordance. Therefore, the Arabic output of the Leipzig publishing house Vogel actually enjoyed a rather wide circulation in the mid-nineteenth-century Levant, despite the difficulties encountered in actually selling the copies.

But the fact remains that Wetzstein was not making any money, while the publisher wanted to be paid – clearly a very material conflict. In a first justification of his failure to sell the product, written in 1858, Wetzstein, in stark contrast to what he had written to Fleischer in the first letter, invokes the classic argument of the unwillingness of the local Arab population to accept print. He claims that the copies could be sold most easily to Turks (Emīn Pasha was presumably one) and, therefore, had only a limited marketability in Damascus.<sup>56</sup> But Wetzstein’s experience seems to show that the book was not rejected because of its print character but because there were other, cheaper printed

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Beirut: MS 230 C615kA v.12 and MS 492.76 K451mA; and in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris: BNF Arabe 5082.

54 See, on him, N.N. Lewis, “Churchill of Lebanon”, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 40 (1953), pp. 217–223.

55 Anṭūn Būlād, *Muḍakkirāt*, MS Dayr Šarfeh ar. 16/28, p. 102.

56 See Huhn, *Der Orientalist*, p. 124.

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عدد كتابه صرف	انوار التذليل واسرار القلوب في التفسير ثلث اجزاء	
١	٢٩	هدية الفلاسفة وطشيين طبع اوريا
		نجوم الفرقان وهو يبين كل كلمة باي صورة
		وبايع ايه طبع اوريا
١	٣٠	
		البرهان في قراءة القرآءة لفخر الدين الرازي
١	٣١	
		رسم العله العربي القديم الهدية متر بترلان
		البروسيانا
١	٣٢	
		رد على الدهرين قطع كامل مجهول مولفه
١	٣٣	
		تفسير بشارت متى ليوحنا فم الذهب ترجمه القولاوي
		جذاة كتاب قطع كامل
١	٣٤	
		الطعنين طبعه قديمه فمذا اجزاء ١٢ الم
١	٣٥	
		هدية المهندسين في علم الهندسه والمساحه
		واشكال رسمه بخطي رجب
x	٣٦	
		شرحه وشرحه
١	٣٦	
		تمهيد المبارات في فن المساحات طبع مصر
١	٣٧	
		اصول الهندسه طبع مصر
١	٣٨	
		الدولى البهيه في الهندسه الوصفيه طبع مصر
١	٣٩	
		المجد والمقابل له لعبد المجيد الساموني
١	٤٠	
		شرح النزهه للغزى ومتمن اللمعه لابن الهيثم
		وشرحه للمارديني وشرح اليا سمينيه في الجبر والمقابل له
١	٤١	
		العلم الالهى مجهول مولفه وانظر للقولاوي ناقص اوله ورفقات
١	٤٢	

FIGURE 15.3 List of books looted from the library of Dayr al-Muḥallīṣ near Ṣayḏā. First is Wetzstein's gift of Fleischer's Bayḏāwī edition. Dayr al-Ṣarfe, MS Armalet ar 16/28, p. 102

books. This case of importing printed books highlights and underpins another line of reasoning: the economic factor. And it is this reasoning Wetzstein adopts in a later and final justification sent to the heirs of Vogel's publishing house in 1868. According to this last report he was, at his departure in 1863, still sitting on seven unsold Baydāwīs. The reasons for this are now explained as follows:

The main reason was always that, while the Bulak print was selling for 90 piasters (c. 4 ½ thalers), your Beidhawi including freight, handling, and customs reached 16 thalers and 7 Sgr. Customs are so expensive because the Beirut shipping company (the Murad Farhi company), to which the shipment was addressed (originally 13 Beidhawi and 4 Muallakat), was forced to pay the customs in kind (i.e. one copy of the Beidhawi). I could fetch the whole price of the book, outrageously high for local standards, in cash only for 1 copy, which was sold to a governor of Damascus. I bartered several of them for other books or gifted them to friends.<sup>57</sup>

The book from Leipzig may have been the better edition when compared to the Egyptian print,<sup>58</sup> but, in the end, it was four times as expensive. And at a price of nearly 400 piasters it was also much more expensive than even lavishly ornamented manuscript copies must have been. When he tried to sell them at a book auction the highest bid was 150 piasters. This can be considered a success. It was a very considerable sum for a book<sup>59</sup> and much higher than the Egyptian edition, even though it was simply not enough to cover the costs.

57 SBB-PK, Manuscript Department, Nachlass Wetzstein I, Kasten 1, F, *Deutscher Handel mit Syrien: F.C.W. Vogel, Wetzstein an Vogel*, Berlin, 14 April 1868: "Der Hauptgrund blieb immer der, dass, während der Bulaker Druck zu 90 Piaster (ca. 4 ½ Thlrn) verkauft wurde, Ihr Beidhawi incl. Fracht, Spesen und Zoll auf 16 Thalern 7 Sgr. stellte. Der Zoll stellte sich dadurch so teuer, das der Beiruter Spediteur (das Handelshaus Murad Farhi) an welche die Sendung (ursprünglich 13 Beidhawi und 4 Muallakat) adressiert worden war, genöthigt war wegen mangelnder Tarifrung der Bücher den Zoll in natura (d.h. ein Exemplar des Beidhawi) zu geben. Den für dortige Verhältnisse exorbitanten Preis des Buches erhielt ich baar nur für 1 Ex., welches an einen Gouverneur von Damask verkauft wurde. Mehrere vertauschte ich gegen andere Bücher oder verschenkte ich an Freunde."

58 Although I was unable to identify an edition of al-Baydāwī, Wetzstein might have been referring to the marginal commentary (*Ḥāšīyya*) by Aḥmad al-Ḥafāḡī, which included the complete text of the work commented on. A reference to this edition is found on the title page of Aḥmad al-Ḥafāḡī, *Kitāb Ṭirāz al-maǧālis*, Cairo AH 1284/1867 (I thank Prof. Kathryn Schwartz, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for alerting me to this title).

59 For prices of manuscript books, see Boris Liebreuz, "Mit Gold nicht aufzuwiegen': Der Wert von Büchern im osmanischen Syrien (11.–13. Jahrhundert AH)", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 164 (2014), pp. 653–686.

Many questions remain unsolved: if the books were such a hard sell, why would several shipments have been made instead of abandoning the project altogether? Was Wetzstein hesitant to tell his teacher and friend that he had exaggerated his book's standing among the local scholars? Or were the first sells promising but the last shipment simply too optimistically big? Were the books, while not easy to sell, still welcome to Wetzstein as an item to trade for manuscripts or as a handy gift to foster his ties with the scholars of the town?

#### 4 Conclusion

Instead of answering these questions, and in lieu of conclusions, I would like to offer the two main impressions I have taken away from this episode.

First, I will attempt a foray into some semi-psychological analysis. The letter of 1849, which started a business that lasted nearly two decades, might also reveal something about Wetzstein's character. To me it suggests a man with a need for rigid affirmation of his scholarly skills, a man who might not have been content to be seen as a diplomat alone and who was looking for respect – even reverence – in the scholarly community. The negative examples of the “amateur” scholars Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817) and Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) still loomed large. The latter's name especially was used as a code for unscholarly amateurishness – he was seen as a man of many talents and experience certainly, but no match for the “real” philologists with their scrupulous treatment of the sources.<sup>60</sup> Wetzstein, it seems, desperately wanted to be one of these “real” philologists. As he points out with no little pride, as a grammarian he was known in Damascus; as such, we might add, he wanted to be known in the Orientalist community back home. Questioning the veracity of the Damascene scholars' professed veneration for the edition from Leipzig would also have questioned the veracity of their esteem for Wetzstein's skills.

The second important point is the impression that printed books were to a surprisingly large degree becoming part of the normal scholarly life in Damascus in the middle of the nineteenth century. This was a fundamental change when compared to the reception of products of the *Müteferrika* and the *Medici*

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60 See Sabine Mangold, *Eine „weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft“: Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2004, p. 8; Boris Liebrecht, “Zum Verhältnis von Fleischer und Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall”, in *Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer – Leben und Wirkung: Ein Leipziger Orientalist des 19. Jahrhunderts mit internationaler Ausstrahlung*, ed. Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein, Frankfurt am Main et al., Peter Lang, 2013, pp. 115–133.

press that we know of. Significantly, the *Anwār al-tanzīl* was a religious work containing the entire text of the Quran. Local scholars had no problem with this fact and still wanted the book, though not to the extent that they were willing to pay the high price of a German publishing house for it when cheaper alternatives were at hand.

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## Ergänzungen zu den hinterlassenen Papieren Johann Gottfried Wetzsteins

*Ingeborg Huhn*

Bis zur Fertigstellung meiner Dissertation<sup>1</sup> im Jahr 1989 war es mir nicht möglich gewesen, Einblick zu nehmen in die amtliche Korrespondenz des Ministeriums für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten in Berlin mit der Gesandtschaft Preußens in Konstantinopel, dem Generalkonsulat in Beirut und dem Konsulat in Damaskus, dem Wetzstein vorstand. Erst nach der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands 1990 konnte ich dies nachholen. Die entsprechenden Konvolute wurden 1993 aus dem Zentralen Staatsarchiv der ehemaligen DDR in Merseburg nach Berlin verbracht.<sup>2</sup>

Die Durchsicht der genannten Bestände hat nun ergeben, dass zu den von mir in der Dissertation dargestellten Abläufen im Allgemeinen nichts wesentlich Abweichendes festgestellt werden kann. Ließen die hinterlassenen Schriftstücke<sup>3</sup> Wetzsteins aber Kommentare und Beurteilungen der jeweiligen Situation nur aus Wetzsteins Sicht zu, erlauben die nun zugänglichen Bestände aus Merseburg bzw. Berlin zum einen, seine Aussagen auf Grund der amtlichen Berichte und Korrespondenzen zu bestätigen bzw. teilweise zu ergänzen; zum anderen spiegeln sie Reaktionen der Kollegen und Vorgesetzten auf Wetzsteins finanzielle Aktionen und vor allem auf sein Handeln im Sinne der preußischen Politik wider. Das Wichtigste davon soll hier dargestellt werden.

1 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1989. Erweiterte Neuauflage unter dem Titel *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 2016.

2 Sie sind dort im Geheimen Staatsarchiv – Preußischer Kulturbesitz besonders unter GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 81 (Konstantinopel) und GStA PK, III. HA Mda (Handschriftenabteilung – Ministerium der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten), I und II zu finden.

3 Aus praktischen Erwägungen entstand aus der ersten Sortierung des Nachlasses folgender Katalog: Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Nachlass des Orientalisten Johann Gottfried Wetzstein in der Handschriftenabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2006.

## 1 Wetzstein und die Orient-Politik Preußens

Die Orient-Politik Preußens zur Zeit Wetzsteins, also unter Friedrich Wilhelm IV. (reg. 1840–1861), war auf Neutralität und Humanität ausgerichtet. Der „Grundstein“ der preußischen Orient-Politik geht bereits auf Friedrich II. (1712–1786) zurück, der politische Einmischungen – wie auch immer – ablehnte. Diese jahrelange, konsequente Haltung Preußens war ein wesentlicher Grund dafür, dass Preußen kaum politischen Einfluss im Orient hatte; dies sollte sich erst unter Bismarck ändern, weil Bismarck „in Kategorien des Mächtegleichgewichts“ dachte; hinzu kam in Wetzsteins Zeit, dass Friedrich Wilhelm IV. als tief-religiöser Mensch das Prinzip der Humanität, also den Menschen in seiner Würde und den ihm zustehenden Rechten, in den Mittelpunkt seiner Entscheidungen stellte.<sup>4</sup> Das war auch Wetzsteins Überzeugung.

Am 1. Oktober 1850<sup>5</sup> schreibt Baron von Pentz<sup>6</sup> hierzu und der Besetzung des preußischen Konsulates in Damaskus an den Freiherrn von Schleinitz<sup>7</sup>: „Die große Bedeutung [...] der Orientalischen Frage für Preußen [...] existiert so lange das türkische Reich in seiner gegenwärtigen Gestaltung von den großen Mächten geduldet wird und tritt zuverlässig noch mächtiger hervor, wenn es dereinst zur Zerstückelung dieses aus so heterogenen Elementen bestehenden Reiches kommt“. So sei in den Dienstinstruktionen vom 3. Juni 1842 vermerkt, dass nicht nur die „inneren und äußeren Zustände des Osmanischen Reiches“, sondern vor allem deren Politik besonders beachtet werden solle, indem sich „eigene Organe“ hierüber informieren sollen. Deswegen hätten die anderen Staaten dies „mit ganz besonderer Sorgfalt und großem Kostenaufwand geregelt“. Im Ausland scheine sich der „Wahn“ zu verbreiten, „als wollten wir unsere bisherige so bedeutungsvolle Stellung in dem europäischen Staatenverbände einem idealen Gedanken opfern“, gegen den sich bereits von verschiedenen Seiten Widersprüche regen. Alle Generalkonsulate in Syrien hätten drei Dragomane. Von Pentz plädiert deswegen für den Erhalt und Ausbau der bestehenden Vertretungen Preußens im Orient, wie es auch andere europäische

4 Siehe hierzu Karl Pröhl, *Die Bedeutung preußischer Politik in den Phasen der orientalischen Frage: Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung deutsch-türkischer Beziehungen von 1606 bis 1871*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1986, S. 214 ff., 380 ff.

5 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 108–118.

6 Ernst Friedrich August Freiherr von Pentz (1803–1874), von 1840 bis 1856 preußischer Generalkonsul für Ägypten und Syrien in Alexandrien/ Kairo.

7 Alexander Graf von Schleinitz (1807–1885), in den Jahren 1849 und 1850 sowie 1858 bis 1861 preußischer Außenminister. Siehe Bärbel Holtz, „Schleinitz, Alexander von“, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 23, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 2007, S. 58.

Staaten handhaben. Großer Wert sei auch auf die Ausbildung der zu entsendenden Beamten zu legen. In diesem Sinne hätten die Österreicher „besoldete Consular-Elève“ eingestellt. Frankreich und England hätten ausschließlich bezahlte Konsuln, Österreich einen Honorar-Konsul, dessen Organisation seines Konsulates sehr gelobt wird. Russland habe nur politisches Interesse und engagiere nur „Subjekte, zu politischer Intrigue befähigt“ und wähle im Sinne dieser Politik „ausschließlich Griechen und Juden“<sup>8</sup>. Was das Konsulat in Damaskus angehe, meint Baron von Pentz, dass „mannigfaltige und unangenehme Berührungen mit den türkischen Civil- und Militär-Behörden in Damaskus“ zu einem intensiven Briefwechsel mit Wetzstein geführt hätten und er sich über „den Eifer“ Wetzsteins „nur lobend“ äußern könne; allerdings könne von jemandem, der in arabischer Literatur ausgebildet sei, nicht die gleiche „Umsicht“ erwartet werden wie von einem ausgebildeten Konsulatsbeamten. So habe sich Wetzstein „öfters Unregelmäßigkeiten zu Schulden kommen lassen“, die eben nur mit dessen Unkenntnis der „dienstlichen Verhältnisse“ entschuldigt werden könnten. Dadurch habe er, Baron von Pentz, aber erkannt, wie schwierig eine geeignete Besetzung des Damaszener Konsulates sei.

Es ist fraglich, ob Wetzstein wirklich so unpolitisch dachte und so ungewandt war, wie es die Ausführungen von Pentz erscheinen lassen. Denn schon 1851 stellte Wetzstein die Schwierigkeiten zusammen, die das Leben in Syrien belasteten und offensichtlich eine erfolgreiche Politik fast unmöglich machten; das Konsulat hatte eine

Position einzunehmen gegenüber:

- 1) dem Fanatismus, Christen- und Europäerhass der Damaszener,
- 2) der Ungerechtigkeit und Willkür der Paschas und Tribunalchefs,
- 3) den ewigen Kriegen der Pforte mit empörten Vasallen und kriegerischen Völkerschaften, welche die türkische Herrschaft tief hasen, wobei die französischen, englischen und russischen mit politischen Instruktionen versehenen Consuln niemals unthätig geblieben sind,
- 4) den Anstrengungen der griechischen Kirche, die nur aus ihr sich rekrutierende junge protestantische Kirche (Hasbeya, Damaskus) zu vernichten.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Zu Wetzsteins Aufzeichnungen über die Juden in Damaskus siehe Ingeborg Huhn: „Über Juden im osmanischen Damaskus um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts: nach Dokumenten aus dem Nachlass Wetzsteins“, in *Osmanistik – Turkologie – Diplomatie*, ed. Christa Fragner und Klaus Schwarz, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1992, S. 77–100.

<sup>9</sup> Wetzstein an v. Manteuffel, Berlin, 19. Dezember 1851; II: 766, S. 150.

Siehe hierzu auch GStA PK, III. HA Mda, I: 7327, S. 227; Bulwer an Russel, Constantinopel,

Je länger Wetzstein in Syrien blieb, desto negativer wurde seine Einschätzung der politischen Lage dort. So schreibt er nach dem Christen-Massaker von 1860 in einem Privatbrief an den preußischen Generalkonsul in Beirut, Theodor Weber<sup>10</sup>: „Ohne europäische Occupation ist und bleibt Syrien ein unseliges Land“.<sup>11</sup>

## 2 Zum „Fall Romano“

Das entscheidende Erlebnis, das Wetzstein zu Beginn seiner Amtszeit 1850 in Damaskus hatte und ihn zu seiner negativen Haltung gegenüber den türkischen Behörden und damit den allgemeinen Lebensbedingungen im Syrien jener Zeit veranlasste, war der „Fall Romano“.<sup>12</sup>

Hierbei ging es um die Misshandlungen des jüdischen Arztes Dr. Abraham Romano mit Todesfolge durch den Damaszener Polizeichef. Da Romano preußischer Protégé war, stellte dies eine ungeheuerliche Verletzung der Kapitulationen<sup>13</sup> dar, die fast zum Abbruch der Beziehungen zwischen Preußen und der Pforte führte.<sup>14</sup> Nach Wetzsteins Darstellung war der Hauptschuldige der „Kiaja“ (Polizeichef) gewesen, der die Bastonnade angeordnet hatte. Die tatkräftige Unterstützung der preußischen Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel habe eine politische Genugtuung für Preußen und sein Konsulat in Damaskus sowie eine große finanzielle Entschädigung für die Familie Romano ermöglicht.

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April 24, 1860: „... considerable number of Greeks, who hate their brother Christians worse than they would be by the Musselmans“. [Sir William Henry Lytton Earl Bulwer (1801–1872), Member of Parliament 1830–1837 u. 1868–1871, Gesandter in Konstantinopel 1858–1865. *Brockhaus* (1996), Leipzig, Mannheim, Bd. 4, S. 128 und Macintyre, Bulwer, Sir William Henry Lytton Earle, in *The Encyclopaedia Americana* (1972) Vol. 4, S. 769; Lord John Russel (1792–1878), 1846–1852 Minister-Präsident, 1859–1866 britischer Außenminister. *Der große Brockhaus* (1956), Wiesbaden, Bd. 10, S. 160].

10 Heinrich Ludwig Theodor Weber (1816–1893); 1842–1855 Verweser, Konsul in Jerusalem u. Beirut, 1855–1874 Konsul u. Generalkonsul in Beirut; 1874–1885 Generalkonsul für Marokko in Tanger.

11 Damaskus, 16. Juli 1860; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7377, S. 45.

12 Huhn, *Der Orientalist*, S. 157–160, S. 372 f. („Motivierung“, S. 24 f.).

13 Verträge zwischen europäischen Staaten und dem Osmanischen Reich, in denen es neben der persönlichen und religiösen Freiheit der Europäer hauptsächlich um die Erlangung von Handelsprivilegien im Osmanischen Reich ging.

14 I: 7440, S. 7: v. Pourtalès [Albert Alexander Graf von- (1812–1861); preuß. Gesandter in Constantinopel 1848–1851, danach Gesandter in Paris 1859–1861] an v. Schleinitz, Constantinopel, 25. September 1850.

Unter den amtlichen Korrespondenzen im Geheimen Staatsarchiv – Preußischer Kulturbesitz befindet sich zu diesem Vorfall eine vertrauliche Akte<sup>15</sup>, aus der Folgendes zu den von Wetzstein gemachten Angaben ergänzt werden kann: Was Wetzstein offenbar nicht wusste, war, dass der Gouverneur von Damaskus Saʿīd Paša (1849–1850) eine „direkte Mitschuld“ an diesem unglücklichen Vorfall hatte. Er hatte nämlich befohlen, dass der „Kiaja“ Osman Efendi<sup>16</sup> Romano „in geeigneter Weise bestrafen solle“.<sup>17</sup> Aus den amtlichen Schreiben geht also hervor, dass nicht der „Kiaja“, sondern Saʿīd Pascha, der Schwager des Sultans, der Hauptschuldige war. Friedrich Wilhelm IV. verlangte persönlich Genugtuung vom Sultan Abdülmecid I. (reg. 1839–1861).<sup>18</sup> Schließlich war es dann der erste Dolmetscher der preußischen Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel, Bosgiovich, der mit allen Vollmachten ausgestattet war und „über vieljährige Erfahrung“<sup>19</sup> verfügte, der Wetzstein unterstützen sollte und die „Affaire Romano“ zu den auch von Wetzstein vorgeschlagenen Konditionen zu Ende brachte. Wenn Wetzstein in Damaskus im Sinne der Politik Preußens wirkte, dann entsprach das ganz sicher nicht nur der ihm angetragenen Mission, sondern vor allem seinen eigenen moralischen Prinzipien.

### 3 Wetzstein und der englische Konsul Richard Wood

Dass Wetzstein sich als Philologe, als Geisteswissenschaftler und Theologe die größte Mühe gab, politische Gegebenheiten zu verstehen und handelspolitische Notwendigkeiten umzusetzen, ist in meiner Dissertation über Wetzstein hinreichend belegt worden. Offensichtlich geriet Wetzstein aber durch sein Verhalten in Schwierigkeiten mit dem diplomatischen Corps Preußens und Englands. Das wird erst durch die neu zugänglichen amtlichen Schreiben

15 GStA PK, III. HA MdA I: 7440: „Vertraulich. Die Mißhandlung des Preußischen Schutzgenossen, Dr. Romano, durch die Behörden von Damaskus“.

16 I: 7440, S. 10: v. Pourtalès an v. Schleinitz, Constantinopel, 25. September 1850.

17 I: 7440, S. 80R: Bosgiovich [Michele-, 1. Dolmetscher, Chargé d'affaire in Constantinopel ab 1803] an Pourtalès, Damas, 23 Octobre 1850 (Copie). Romano wurde unterstellt, einen Dieb nächtens in sein Haus gelockt zu haben, um ihn zu töten.

18 I: 7440, S. 3: In dem Schreiben des Minister-Präsidenten v. Schleinitz an Pourtalès, Berlin, 25. September 1850 fasst v. Schleinitz den Inhalt des von Friedrich Wilhelm IV. abgefassten Briefes (Sans-Souci, 23. September 1850) an Sultan I. Abd al-Mağīd I wie folgt zusammen: „..., daß die Fortdauer der persönlichen freundlichen Beziehungen Sr Maj. zu Sr Hoheit dem Sultan in engem Zusammenhange mit denjenigen Schritten stehe, welche die Pforte thun werde, um Genugtuung für die in Damascus der königlichen Regierung zugefügten Beleidigung zu gewähren ...“

19 I: 7440, S. 57: v. Pourtalès an Wetzstein, Pera, 5. Oktober 1850.

deutlich. Dies betrifft zunächst sein Verhältnis zum britischen Konsul Richard Wood<sup>20</sup> und das Zerwürfnis zwischen beiden. Einem Bericht<sup>21</sup> des königlichen Generalkonsulatsverwesers Theodor Weber vom 23. Dezember 1851 ist Folgendes zu entnehmen: Als Vertretung des preußischen Konsuls in Damaskus während dessen Abwesenheit fungierte der britische Konsul Richard Wood, weil Preußen und England eine gemeinsame Politik verfolgten, vor allem, was den Schutz der Protestanten im Osmanischen Reich anging. Wetzstein hatte Damaskus verlassen<sup>22</sup>, ohne mit Wood Rücksprache gehalten und ihn in die laufenden Geschäfte eingeweiht zu haben.

Möglicherweise hat Wetzstein diese Rücksprache nicht für nötig gehalten, weil er seinem erfahrenen Dragoman Stambuli die Kompetenz zu allen möglichen Verhandlungen zutraute.

Außerdem hatte Weber erfahren, dass Wetzstein, noch in Damaskus, ein rechtskräftiges Urteil von 1851 (gegen den Emir Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Šihābī) nicht vollstreckt hatte<sup>23</sup>. Der Fürst war angeklagt, die englische Königin (Queen Victoria, 1819–1901)<sup>24</sup> beleidigt zu haben. Vor seiner Abreise hatte Wetzstein eine verschlossene Kiste mit Aktenstücken und privaten Dokumenten bei seinem Honorar-Dragoman Schehade Stambuli<sup>25</sup> deponiert. Weber, in Beirut, entschloss sich, diese Akten Wood zugänglich zu machen und ließ die versiegelte Kiste Wetzsteins öffnen und nach Entnahme der entsprechenden Dokumente und des preußisch-königlichen Siegels wieder versiegeln, um Wetzstein „keinen Vorwand zur Beschwerde“ zu geben. So sollte Wood die Gelegenheit erhalten, das Urteil zu vollstrecken. Dieser konnte aber, der deutschen Sprache nicht mächtig, deutsche Akten ohne fremde Hilfe nicht lesen. Hier hätte Schehade Stambuli helfen sollen. Vermutlich hatte Wetzstein deshalb die besagten Akten nicht an Wood übergeben, sondern sie in der Kiste verschlossen, weil er die Reaktion Woods voraussah und im Sinne der Humanität die Vollstreckung des Urteils, mit dem Wetzstein nicht einverstanden war, befürchtete.

20 Richard Wood (1806–1900); ausgebildeter Dolmetscher; 1841–1855 englischer Konsul in Damaskus, 1855–1879 Generalkonsul in Tunis.

21 „Auszug aus einem Bericht des Preuß. Generalkonsulatsverwesers Th. Weber“; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 258.

22 Heimaturlaub 11. November 1851 bis 25. Juli 1852.

23 Wetzstein war mit dem Urteil nicht einverstanden und hatte als preußischer Konsul alle Rechte einer Zivil- und Kriminalbehörde über Schutzbefohlene auszuüben.

24 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 262.

25 Auch: Šahāda al-Islāmbūli.

Wetzsteins Stellungnahme<sup>26</sup> zu diesem Vorfall, das Urteil betreffend, folgte erst zwei Jahre später mit Schreiben vom 12. August 1853 an den königlichen Ministerpräsidenten und Minister der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Freiherrn von Manteuffel<sup>27</sup> in Berlin, und zwar als Antwort auf die bei der preußischen Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel eingegangene Beschwerde der britischen Regierung: Wetzstein sollte die Bestrafung des Fürsten Sa'd al-Dīn al-Šihābī von Ḥaṣḥbayyā, in der Biqā'-Ebene gelegen, behindert haben.

In besagtem Schreiben schildert Wetzstein folgende Hintergründe:

Im Winter 1851/52, als er im Heimaturlaub war, hatte der Fürst von Ḥaṣḥbayyā, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Šihābī, auf Befehl der Hohen Pforte angebliche Mörder eines angesehenen muslimischen Geistlichen, eine Familie Ḥaddād, gefangen genommen. Nachdem ihnen aber der Mord nicht nachgewiesen werden konnte, waren sie wieder auf freien Fuß gesetzt worden. Anschließend hatten sie den Richter wegen Misshandlung beim britischen Konsulat verklagt. Wood verlangte daraufhin vom osmanischen Generalgouverneur, dass zwei Emire aus Ḥaṣḥbayyā, Verwandte des Sa'd al-Dīn al-Šihābī, ins „Gefängnis der gemeinsten Verbrecher“ verbracht werden sollten. Nach einer längeren Haftstrafe einigten sie sich mit Wood und zahlten 5000 Piaster an die Familie Ḥaddād und „17.000 Piaster an Herrn Schemāja“, einen Österreicher und Freund des Gouverneurs. Die beiden Verwandten des Emirs machten aus ihrem Ärger über den britischen Konsul keinen Hehl, mit der Folge, dass Wood die beiden Emire beim Gouverneur wegen Korruption anzeigte: Sie hätten den Gouverneur durch „Vermittlung des genannten Schemāja mit 17.000 Piastern bestochen“. Diese Summe war von dem Financier der Emire, dem alten Stambuli – preußischer Protégé und langjähriger Mitarbeiter des preußischen Konsulats in Damaskus – zur Verfügung gestellt worden. Wood verlangte nun von Stambuli, dass er gestehen sollte, er habe das „Geld für den Gouverneur an Schemaja gezahlt“, was Stambuli bestritt. Die Situation verschlimmerte sich für Stambuli dadurch, dass ihm gesagt wurde, Wetzstein kehre nicht nach Damaskus zurück und Wood würde zukünftig das preußische Konsulat leiten. Jetzt flüchtete Stambuli zum österreichischen Konsulat, wo ihm allerdings Hilfe verweigert wurde. Stambulis Aussage vor dem Stadtrat von Damaskus hatte dann zur Folge, dass Wood die Bestechungsklage zurücknehmen musste und die Emire

26 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 259.

27 Otto Theodor Freiherr von Manteuffel (1805–1882); 1848–1850 Innenminister in Preußen, politisch führender Kopf der Regierung; 1850–1858 Minister-Präsident und Außenminister. Siehe Günther Grünthal, „Manteuffel, Otto von“, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 16, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1990, S. 89.

nach Ḥaṣḥbayyā zurückkehrten. Seit dieser Zeit standen sich die Šihābīs und der englische Konsul äußerst feindselig gegenüber.

Im Januar 1853 erschienen dann die beiden Emire von Ḥaṣḥbayyā, Aḥmad Šihāb und Ġa'ḡa' Šihāb, bei Wetzstein und informierten ihn, dass Wood den Emir Sa'd al-Dīn al-Šihābī wegen beleidigender Worte über die englische Königin (Queen Victoria) angeklagt hätte. Der betagte Emir bestritt, dergleichen gesagt zu haben und bat Wetzstein um Vermittlung. Wood bestand aber auf einer Bestrafung, indem er drei Maßnahmen forderte: 1. die Absetzung des Emirs durch die Regierung von Damaskus, 2. eine 4–6 monatige Verbannung und 3. die „Nicht-Succession“ (die Nicht-Fortführung) seiner Verwendung.<sup>28</sup>

Wetzstein, der eine persönliche Aussprache der beiden Kontrahenten anstrebte, bat den angeklagten Emir zu sich nach Damaskus. Schließlich kam der Emir tatsächlich und wurde anlässlich seines Besuches beim osmanischen Gouverneur von diesem in Arrest genommen. Es folgte ein „langwieriger Notenwechsel“<sup>29</sup> zwischen Wood und dem Gouverneur. Der Emir bestritt weiterhin die ihm zur Last gelegten Äußerungen, Wood bestand auf der Umsetzung seiner drei Punkte. Nach ungefähr drei Wochen verbreitete sich das Gerücht, Wetzstein hätte den Emir in die Hände der Türken und Engländer gespielt. Daraufhin begab sich Wetzstein zu Wood, um die ganze Angelegenheit zu beenden. Wood zeigte sich nicht gesprächsbereit und schickte am 12. April 1853 ein Schreiben an Konsul Theodor Weber in Beirut, in dem er Wetzstein der Einmischung in britische Angelegenheiten und eines respektlosen Verhaltens ihm gegenüber bezichtigte. Wetzstein lehnte weitere Diskussionen mit Wood ab, weil er sich nicht auf „ein Terrain“ begeben wollte, „wohin ich ihm als Ehrenmann nicht folgen“<sup>30</sup> könnte. Inzwischen hatte die Pforte die Weisung erlassen, dass der Gouverneur „die Untergouverneure nach Belieben“<sup>31</sup> ein- und absetzen könnte; so wurde auch der alte Emir zugunsten eines seiner Verwandten abgesetzt.

Wetzstein war trotz allem bemüht, mit Wood einvernehmlich auszukommen: So hatte er für die Zeit seiner Abwesenheit Wood die Verwaltung des preussischen Konsulats im Sinne der Diplomatie auch aus Gefälligkeit ihm gegenüber anvertraut und ihn wegen der von Weber vorgenommenen gewaltsamen Öffnung seiner privaten Kiste und wegen der unangemessenen Behandlung des Schehade Stambuli nicht angesprochen. In dem Streit um den Emir Sa'd al-Dīn al-Šihābī hatte er letztlich seine persönlichen Vorstellungen zurückge-

28 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 261.

29 *ibid.*, S. 261 Rückseite (R.).

30 *ibid.*, S. 262R.

31 *ibid.*, S. 263.

stellt, um ein friedliches Miteinander zu ermöglichen; also war er wieder seinen Humanitätsidealen gefolgt. Wetzstein konnte sich nicht gegen Woods „levantische Klugheit“<sup>32</sup> durchsetzen, er hatte keinen „Hang zur Intrige und Rachsucht“<sup>33</sup>, wie er es bei Wood sah. Woods Art legt einen Vergleich zum ‚Kolonialherren‘ nahe, das ganze Gegenteil zu Wetzsteins humanitärer Ausrichtung. Letztendlich wurde Wetzsteins Wesen bei der Bevölkerung und den amtlichen Vertretern besonders geschätzt, was für die Politik Preußens nur vorteilhaft sein konnte.

Aus den amtlichen Akten geht hervor, dass Richard Wood auch vom preußischen Gesandten in Konstantinopel, General von Wildenbruch<sup>34</sup>, kritisch gesehen wurde: Am 14. April 1853<sup>35</sup> vertraut er dem preußischen Ministerpräsidenten, Freiherrn von Manteuffel in Berlin, sein Urteil über Richard Wood an, um den Hintergrund der zwischen Wood und Wetzstein „bestehenden Feindschaft“ zu erklären: „Ich kann aus eigener Erfahrung bezeugen, daß H. Wood ein unverträglicher, intriganter und äußerst herrschsüchtiger, aber sehr fähiger und gewandter Mann ist, dem der Gedanke, neben seinem bedeutenden Einfluß in Damaskus einen anderen aufkommen zu lassen, keine Ruhe läßt. Der Königliche Konsul Dr. Wetzstein hat, was vollkommen Recht ist, sich von Hause aus geweigert, sich dem Einfluß des H. Wood zu beugen.“ Von Wildenbruch fährt fort, dass Wetzstein versucht habe, einen ebensolchen Einfluss auf die Bevölkerung durch seine Person auszuüben und damit „einen Kampf mit einem ihm in aller Weise überlegenen Gegner begonnen, der zu Unannehmlichkeiten aller Art führen wird und bereits geführt hat“.

Dies bezieht von Wildenbruch auf die Vermittlerrolle, die Wood wie auch Wetzstein, „bei den Unruhen [spielten], welche durch den Aufstand der muhamedanischen Gebirgsvölker des Haurän gegen das Conscriptionsgesetz<sup>36</sup> entstanden waren, zu dem für beide in keiner Weise eine Veranlassung vorlag“. Von Wildenbruch erläutert, dass die Pforte ein für das gesamte Reich geltendes

32 v. Wildenbruch an v. Manteuffel, Konstantinopel, 21. September 1853; GStA PK, III. HA Mda, II: 766, S. 244.

33 *ibid.*, S. 243R.

34 Anton Albert Hermann Louis von Wildenbruch (1803–1874), 1842–1846 Generalkonsul für Syrien u. Palästina in Beirut, 1851–1858 preußischer Gesandter in Konstantinopel.

35 GStA PK, III. HA Mda; II: 766, S. 232 f.

36 Conscriptionsgesetz: Hier wird Bezug auf die Rekrutierungsgesetze ab 1846 genommen, d.h. „die Einführung des Losverfahrens [...], das] in allen Regierungsbezirken auf mehr oder weniger große Schwierigkeiten“ (S. 264) stieß; im Hauran sollten erstmals im Sommer 1852 Rekruten ausgehoben werden (S. 266); Tobias Heinzelmann, *Heiliger Kampf oder Landesverteidigung: Die Diskussion um die Einführung der allgemeinen Militärpflicht im Osmanischen Reich 1826–1856*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2004.

Gesetz auch auf das Gebiet des Ḥaurān ausdehnen wollte. Von Wildenbruch bezeichnete dieses Gesetz als Grundlage des militärischen Systems der Türkei, was die christliche Bevölkerung überhaupt nicht tangiere. Daher hätten die europäischen Mächte keinerlei Recht, sich einzumischen. Während Wood sich nun den türkischen Behörden gegenüber auf das Angebot einer Vermittlerrolle beschränkte – und damit „in dieser Beziehung völlig korrekt dastand“ – habe Wetzstein „direkt durch Boten“ mit den Aufständischen Kontakt aufgenommen und sich dadurch in die inneren Angelegenheiten der Pforte eingemischt. Von Wildenbruch sieht als mögliche Ursache dieser seiner Meinung nach politischen Ungeschicktheit Wetzsteins ein gewisses Geltungsbedürfnis, das „nicht honoräre“ und „handelstreibende“ Konsuln in Syrien zeigten, im Gegensatz zu denjenigen Konsuln, die aufgrund beruflicher Erfahrungen und finanzieller Sicherheiten ein entsprechendes Verhalten nicht nötig hätten. Eine, abgesehen von seinem anfänglich geäußerten Verständnis für Wetzsteins Verhalten Wood gegenüber, ziemlich deutliche Einschätzung Wetzsteins – wenn auch vorsichtig formuliert.

Überaus befremdlich ist von Wildenbruchs Kommentar vom April 1853 deshalb, weil ihm ein Schreiben des Ministerpräsidenten von Manteuffel an Wetzstein vom 11. Dezember 1852<sup>37</sup> mit selbigem Datum zur Kenntnis gebracht worden war, in dem von Manteuffel den preußischen Konsul in Damaskus im Auftrag des Königs um Vermittlung bittet: „... Eure Majestät der König ... durch das persönliche Ansehen und den großen Ruf der Unparteilichkeit, welchen Ex. sich zu erwerben gewußt haben, veranlaßt worden sind, Ihre Vermittlung zur Schlichtung der Differenzen nachzusuchen ...“; wenn Wetzsteins Bemühungen um die „Wiederherstellung der Ruhe“ „von größtem Erfolg und [zu] allerhöchste[r] Zufriedenheit“ [des Königs] verlaufen, wird ihm eine Anerkennung in Aussicht gestellt. Von Wildenbruchs Äußerungen in seinem oben erwähnten Schreiben lassen die Annahme zu, dass er die Wünsche des Königs ignoriert zu haben scheint. Dies wiederum unterstützt Karl Pröhls Aussage<sup>38</sup> über die „Eigenmächtigkeiten der preußischen Diplomaten im Ausland“.

Sicherlich hat zu dieser Weisung des Königs an Wetzstein ein Brief des bekannten Orientalisten Heinrich Petermann (1801–1876) an den Ministerpräsidenten von Manteuffel beigetragen. Petermann hielt sich zu jener Zeit in Damaskus auf und galt als sehr guter Kenner der dortigen Verhältnisse. In seinem Schreiben spricht sich Petermann folgendermaßen nicht nur für eine Vermittlung seitens Wetzsteins aus, sondern auch für dessen Auszeichnung nach

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37 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7450, S. 5.

38 Pröhl, *Die Bedeutung*, (1986), S. 214.

erfolgreicher Beendigung der Mission<sup>39</sup>: „... da der Dr. Wetzstein durch seine Unparteilichkeit und Uneigennützigkeit seinem Consulate ein moralisches Uebergewicht über alle andern zu geben vermocht hat. Er ist ein Retter aller Bedrängten, und Muhamedaner und Juden kommen gleich den Christen zu ihm, um seine Hülfe gegen Bedrückungen der Regierung in Anspruch zu nehmen. Er steht bei den obersten Civil- und Militär-Behörden in größter Achtung, und stets befolgen sie seine Rathschläge“.

Wetzstein hatte also den Auftrag des preußischen Königs erfüllt und war der Linie der preußischen Außenpolitik gefolgt. Von Wildenbruch hatte offensichtlich Wetzsteins Absicht, die Differenzen auf persönlichem Wege zu regeln, nicht gesehen – ein Beispiel dafür, wie Wetzsteins Humanitätsidee falsch verstanden wurde.

Die Spannungen, die zwischen Wood und Wetzstein längere Zeit bestanden hatten, lösten sich gegen Ende von Woods Amtszeit (1855) in Damaskus auf. Wood äußert sich über Wetzstein sehr positiv und dankbar, indem er im Mai 1855<sup>40</sup> an Lord Stratford de Redcliffe<sup>41</sup> schreibt: „... the praiseworthy conduct of Mr Wetzstein ... defended the honor of the British Army & officer with energy & warmth [...] finally persuaded the Pasha of Damascus to address a letter of explanation to Col. Walpole. The generous conduct of Mr Wetzstein [...] deserves the expression of my gratitude & thanks“<sup>42</sup>. Letztendlich hatte sich also Wetzsteins Vorstellung von Humanität durchgesetzt. Die Ära Wood ging am 30. August 1855 mit seinem Ausscheiden aus dem englischen Konsulat zu Ende, und mit dessen Nachfolger, James Brant<sup>43</sup> hatte Wetzstein ein wesentlich freundlicheres und entspannteres Verhältnis als mit Richard Wood.

39 Petermann an v. Manteuffel, Damaskus, 18. November 1852; GStA PK, III. HA Mda, I: 7450, S. 3 f.

40 GStA PK, III. HA Mda; II: 766, S. 290: „Extract from a Dispatch from Mr Consul Wood to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe“, Damascus 26th May 1855.

41 Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe (1786–1880); britischer Gesandter in Konstantinopel von 1825–1828, 1831–1832 und 1842–1858.

42 GStA PK, III. HA Mda, II: 766, S. 293. Colonel Frederick Walpole, brit. Offizier, gehörte zu General Beatons bâşı-bosuks (irregular troupes), deren Verhalten Ärger erregt hatte; siehe hierzu James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collaps 1839–1878*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2000, S. 275 f. und 442–443: „Rape, A Non-Institutional Aftereffect of Conquest“.

43 James Brant (1790–1861), von 1856 bis 1860 englischer Konsul in Damaskus.

#### 4 Zur „Affaire Dāʿūd ‘Abādī“

Die amtlichen Akten zeigen in einem weiteren Fall, welche Schwierigkeiten mit seinen Vorgesetzten Wetzstein aus seinem Verhalten im Sinne der Humanität erwachsen.

1858 ereignete sich die „Affäre um Dāʿūd ‘Abādī“, Wetzsteins langjährigen, jüdischen und von ihm hochgeschätzten Dragoman, die Wetzstein viel Ärger, auch mit seinen preußischen Kollegen, brachte. Aus Wetzsteins Schriftstücken ergab sich folgender Sachverhalt: Dāʿūd ‘Abādī hatte sich eines Vergehens schuldig gemacht, weswegen Wetzstein ihn im August 1858 nach Beirut ins preußische Generalkonsulat zu Theodor Weber abschob. Den Grund hierfür nennt Wetzstein selbst nicht, lediglich, dass er letzten Endes von Dāʿūd enttäuscht gewesen sei. Seiner Frau Ernestine gegenüber stellte Wetzstein fest: „Die Daudsche Geschichte ist nicht so, wie die Berliner Zeitungen beschreiben“. Diese hatten berichtet, dass Dāʿūd eine Affäre mit einer kurdischen Frau gehabt habe; deswegen sei er von Fanatikern arg misshandelt worden – was Wetzstein nicht bestätigen konnte. Um weiterem Ärger seitens der Familie der Kurdin vorzubeugen, sei Dāʿūd nach Beirut geschickt worden.

Aus der amtlichen Korrespondenz geht nun zusätzlich hervor, dass diese Affäre nicht nur ganz Damaskus in große Aufregung versetzte, sondern die diplomatischen Vertretungen über Damaskus hinaus in Bewegung brachte. Wetzstein hatte sich am 11. August 1858 mit einem ausführlichen Bericht über den Dāʿüdschen Vorfall an seinen Kollegen Weber in Beirut gewandt. Weber hatte dann eine Kopie dieses Berichtes am 15. August an den preußischen Ministerpräsidenten, Freiherrn von Manteuffel, direkt nach Berlin geschickt.<sup>44</sup> In seinem Schreiben an von Manteuffel vertritt Weber die Ansicht, „Daʿud hat sehr Unrecht getan, sich mit dieser Person zu befassen“, der Witwe „eines ehemaligen preußischen Kawassen, der im letzten Rhamadhan umgebracht“ worden war. Dāʿüds Verhalten, d. h. sein Verhältnis zu der Kurdin, sei „die Veranlassung des ersten Ausbruchs des muhammedanischen Fanatismus“ geworden. Damit meinte Weber offenbar den Aufstand der Bewohner des Viertels Qanawāt, in dem die Frau wohnte.

An den Gesandten in Konstantinopel, von Wildenbruch, hatte Wetzstein zunächst keinen Bericht geschickt. Von Wildenbruch erfuhr von diesem diesen Vorfall erst nur durch den Bericht des kaiserlich russischen Generalkonsuls für Syrien an die russische Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel.<sup>45</sup> Wetzsteins Bericht

44 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7327, S. 5f.

45 (Copie:) Telatissid, agent consulaire de Russie à Damas, Damas, 28 Juillet 1858 und Mar

zur Lage erreichte ihn, trotz zweimaliger Aufforderung, erst am 11. Oktober;<sup>46</sup> Wetzstein hatte wohl deswegen so spät reagiert, weil er Dā'ūds Verhalten als „Unfug“ einstuft, d. h. als politisch unbedeutend.

Die Kommunikation bezüglich der Dā'ūdschen Geschichte mutet aus heutiger Sicht merkwürdig an: Von Wildenbruch hatte aus einem Schreiben des Königlich-Preußischen Gesandten in Frankreich, Freiherrn von Rosenberg<sup>47</sup>, an Ministerpräsident von Manteuffel in Berlin<sup>48</sup> erfahren, dass sich der französische Konsul in Damaskus – obwohl die Beziehungen zwischen ihm und Wetzstein „wenig collegial“ seien – beim Gouverneur für Dā'ūd eingesetzt habe.

Auffällig ist ein Schreiben des französischen Konsuls in Damaskus, Max Outrey<sup>49</sup>, an den französischen Gesandten Thouvenel<sup>50</sup> in Konstantinopel in diesem Zusammenhang<sup>51</sup>: Hier wird zum ersten Mal in der gesamten Korrespondenz – Wetzsteins Schreiben inbegriffen – die Ansicht geäußert, dass der Grund für den wieder aufgeflamten Fanatismus in dem Verhalten eines

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Elias Schonair, 2 Août 1858 (signé N. Moukhine) [an] Son Excellence M. de Apollinaire Boutineff [(1787–1866), ausgebildet im Hause des Großvaters von Pushkins Frau; 1816–1821 Sekretär in der russischen Gesandtschaft Konstantinopel; 1829 Geschäftsträger der russischen Gesandtschaft Konstantinopel; 1842 in Sondermission wegen Serbien nach Konstantinopel; 1830–1831 u. 1856–1858 Gesandter in Konstantinopel; stellte nach dem Krimkrieg Beziehungen zw. Russland und der Türkei wieder her.], 27. November 1858; GStA PK, III. HA Mda, I: 7327, S. 8, 9.

46 a) v. Wildenbruch an v. Manteuffel, 12. Oktober 1858; GStA PK, III. HA Mda, I: 7327, S. 30f.

b) Wetzstein an den Königl. Legationsrath und Geschäftsträger bei der Hohen Pforte etc. Eichmann [Friedrich Christoph von (1826–1875); interimistischer Geschäftsträger in Konstantinopel 1858–1859, danach vortragender Rat im AA; deutscher Gesandter in Konstantinopel 1873–1874], Damaskus, 16. November 1858; GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 81: Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 90f.

c) Wetzstein an v. Wildenbruch, Damaskus, 28. September 1858 (eingegangen in Konstantinopel am 11. Oktober) und Damaskus, 4. Oktober 1858; *ibid.*, I: 277, S. 92f.

47 Adalbert Franz Anton Freiherr von Rosenberg (1818–1880), seine früh verstorbene Mutter war eine Freiin von Schleinitz; Jurist; diplomatischer Dienst 1847–1875; 1851 als Vertreter des preußischen Gesandten in Konstantinopel; 1855–1859 Geschäftsträger an der preußischen Gesandtschaft in Paris. 1862 ernannte ihn König Wilhelm I. zum Gesandten in Stockholm. 1851 hatte er für seine Verdienste von Friedrich Wilhelm IV. den Johanniterorden erhalten. Ausführliche Informationen verdanke ich seinem Urenkel Adalbert Freiherr von Rosenberg (Dortmund).

48 Paris, 6. September 1858; GStA PK, III. HA Mda, I: 7327, S. 14.

49 Maxime Outrey, französischer Konsul in Damaskus 1856–1862.

50 Édouard Antoine de Thouvenel (1818–1866), französischer Gesandter in Konstantinopel 1855–1860; 1860–1862 Ministre Sénateur.

51 Damas, 11 Août 1858; GStA PK, I. HA. Rep. Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 101–105 und GStA PK, III. HA Mda I: 7327, S. 12.

Juden gesehen wird. Was die falschen Zeugenaussagen, „ces faux témoignages“, angehe, so hätte Dā`ūd viele Feinde: wegen seiner „fort triste reputation et peut être le grand nombre d'ennemis“, die er sich in diesem Land gemacht hätte. Von Feinden seines Dragomans hat Wetzstein selbst nichts berichtet – so wie er sich überhaupt wenig am Gerede über andere beteiligte.

Welchen Wirbel diese Geschichte verursachte, lässt sich nach den amtlichen Korrespondenzen daran ermesen, dass sich auch der preußische Gesandte in London, Graf von Bernsdorff,<sup>52</sup> einschaltete und dem Ministerpräsidenten von Manteuffel in Berlin mitteilte:<sup>53</sup> Er habe einen Privatbrief von Lord Malmesbury<sup>54</sup> erhalten, worin dieser schreibt, Sir Henry Bulwer sei von ihm über die Vorgänge informiert und er – Malmesbury – verspreche, dass „das Englische Cabinet keinen wichtigen Schritt im Orient thun werde, ohne Eurer Excellenz Kenntniß davon zu geben.“ Wetzstein hat das Ganze schließlich dadurch beendet, dass er nach Rücksprache mit dem Militärgouverneur Aḥmed Pascha Dā`ūd nach Beirut zu Theodor Weber bringen ließ.<sup>55</sup>

## 5 Zur Kritik an Wetzstein

Bei der Durchsicht der amtlichen Schreiben zeigt sich, dass das Verhältnis seines Vorgesetzten in Konstantinopel von Wildenbruch zu Wetzstein recht wechselhaft gewesen ist. Äußerte sich der Gesandte 1852 noch verhältnismäßig positiv,<sup>56</sup> schrieb er Anfang 1857 einen heftigen Beschwerdebrief an den damaligen Minister-Präsidenten und Außenminister von Manteuffel nach Berlin:<sup>57</sup>

52 Albrecht Graf von Bernstorff (1809–1873), 1854–1861 und 1862–1873 Gesandter in London; 1861/62 preußischer Außenminister, trat für die westliche Orientierung der preußischen Politik ein; sehr gläubig, ev.; Kritiker Bismarcks. Heinz Gollwitzer, „Bernstorff, Albrecht Graf von“, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 2, Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1955, S. 136.

53 London, 24. September 1858; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7327, S. 24.

54 James Howard Harris, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury (1807–1889), 1852 und 1858–1859 Außenminister. *Der große Brockhaus* (1955) Wiesbaden, Bd. 7, S. 480.

55 Wetzstein an von Wildenbruch, Damaskus, 28. September 1858; GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 81, Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 96R; und GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7327, S. 31 f.

56 Von Wildenbruch an Friedrich Wilhelm IV., Konstantinopel, 25. November 1852; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7450, S. 2, 2R:

„der wohlmeinenden Privattätigkeit dieses mit den Verhältnissen wohlbekannten Beamten Anerkennung zollend,

habe ich dennoch geglaubt, von dem Versuche einer offiziellen Intervention abmahnen zu müssen“.

57 Konstantinopel, 9. Februar 1857; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 3 f.

– Zunächst kritisiert von Wildenbruch darin Wetzsteins fehlende Berichte<sup>58</sup>, denn der letzte Bericht aus Damaskus sei 1854 geschrieben worden.

Tatsächlich hätte Wetzstein aber spätestens ab 1855 mit der Gleichstellung der Konsulate<sup>59</sup> Beirut und Damaskus nach Konstantinopel und nicht mehr nur nach Beirut berichten müssen, was er aber möglicherweise deswegen nicht tat, weil ihm Dinge unwichtig erschienen, denen von Wildenbruch größere Bedeutung zumaß.

– Außerdem sei der Gesandte nicht einmal von Wetzsteins Abwesenheit vom Konsulat<sup>60</sup> informiert worden. Auch habe Wetzstein die Leitung des Königlichen Konsulats einem „vollständig unfähigen eingeborenen Beamten“ überlassen.

Gemeint war hier der Kanzler des Konsulates, Šaḥāda Stambuli, den Wetzstein persönlich sehr schätzte.

– Die schwerwiegendste Anschuldigung von Wildenbruchs besteht in dem Vorwurf, Wetzstein habe „wucherische Transaktionen“ vorgenommen, für private finanzielle Operationen das Ansehen seiner amtlichen Stellung benutzt, und zwar in Gemeinschaft mit „meist jüdischen Eingeborenen“, die dadurch bei Schwierigkeiten den Landesbehörden gegenüber von dem Konsulat profitieren konnten.<sup>61</sup> Wetzstein ließe zweierlei Geschäfte von jüdischen Agenten ausführen:<sup>62</sup> 1) Gewährung von Darlehen an die Bauern, deren Rückzahlung durch Einziehung von Teilen ihrer Ernten erfolge und 2) Ankauf von Forderungen zu niedrigen Preisen, aber dann volle Eintreibung derselben.

Von Wildenbruch bezieht sich hier auf die Zusammenarbeit Wetzsteins mit „den jüdischen Eingeborenen“ Šaḥāda und Ya‘qūb al-Islāmbūli (Stambuli), die von Anfang an im preußischen Konsulat bei Wetzstein arbeiteten und später dann bei Wetzsteins landwirtschaftlichen Aktivitäten finanziell hilfreich wurden. Ein Beleg für das Profitieren der jüdischen Mitarbeiter von ihrer Stellung im preußischen Konsulat lässt sich nicht finden.

Wenn von Wildenbruch von „wucherischen Transaktionen“ spricht, so meint er offenbar auch Wetzsteins Zinspolitik: Wetzstein hatte den Bauern in den von

58 Merkwürdig ist, dass Wetzstein wegen fehlender Berichte kritisiert wird, Weber aber offensichtlich nicht; Weber an von Manteuffel, Beirut, 6. August 1858: Nach seiner Rückkehr nach Beirut im Frühjahr 1856 hätte er bis zum 6. August 1858 keine Zeit gehabt, Berichte zu schreiben. *GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7327, S. 1.*

59 Erlass vom 21. August 1855; *GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 3f.*

60 Heimaturlaub 1851/52.

61 *GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 1 bis S. 4R.*

62 Ebenso im Schreiben v. d. Goltz an v. Schleinitz, Konstantinopel, 28. Februar 1860; *GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 64R.*

ihm 1855 erworbenen Dörfern Sekkā und al-Ġassūla Kredite<sup>63</sup> zu 18% und 24% Zinsen<sup>64</sup> gewährt, um einen schnelleren und effektiveren Start zu ermöglichen.

– Weiterhin vermerkt von Wildenbruch, dass Wetzstein die „Nützlichkeit eines Königlichen Consulats zu Damaskus sowie die Ersprießlichkeit seines Wirkens nicht seinen Vorgesetzten, sondern dem Publikum“ bekannt gemacht habe.

Damit meint von Wildenbruch wohl Wetzsteins Publikationen und Vorträge über seine monatelangen Reisen und seinen Aufenthalt in Damaskus.

Hierzu eine Bemerkung aus den neu zugänglichen Akten, auf welche Weise Wetzstein versuchte, das preußische Konsulat angesehen und beliebt zu machen<sup>65</sup>: Sein Haus war der „Versammlungsort aller gelehrten Muhammedaner der Stadt“; die ältesten Familien von Damaskus waren vertreten: „die Attar, Aschlunyis, Muradis“, die jeden Nachmittag seine „Säle und Bibliothek“ selbst noch in seiner Abwesenheit füllten; „dadurch gewann ich das Volk“ und ebenso die Gunst des Civil- und Militärgouverneurs. Wetzstein übernahm die im Orient üblichen Gepflogenheiten, die besonders großzügige Gastfreundschaft. Dies war für ihn nicht nur als Vertreter preußischer Interessen wichtig, sondern auch für die Sicherheit seiner Person, denn Wetzstein sah, dass die Situation in Syrien „gefährlicher, blutiger und von Jahr zu Jahr verwickelter“ geworden war, seitdem Ibrahim Pascha Damaskus 1840 verlassen hatte.

Der gewisse Unterton der letzten Formulierung von Wildenbruchs Kritik an Wetzsteins Öffentlichkeitsarbeit ist nicht zu überhören.

Die oben genannten Kritikpunkte veranlassen von Wildenbruch zu der Feststellung, dass Wetzstein als Vertreter Preußens nicht länger tragbar sei, er dem Ansehen der konsularischen Vertretungen schade, und er stellt deswegen den „Antrag“, das Konsulat in Damaskus zu schließen und die Interessen Preußens durch Weber in Beirut vertreten zu lassen; dadurch würden dann auch die seiner Meinung nach „höchst bedeutenden dienstlichen Liquidationen“ größtenteils wegfallen.<sup>66</sup> Die Antwort aus Berlin ließ nicht lange auf sich warten:

63 S. hierzu: Huhn, *Der Orientalist*, S. 288 ff.

64 Zur Frage überhöhter Zinsforderungen jener Zeit sind die Korrespondenzen des Jahres 1860 zwischen v. d. Goltz und v. Schleinitz aufschlussreich: Frankreich konnte die marode Türkei 1860 mit Anleihen von 400 Mill. Francs zu 53  $\frac{3}{4}$  % Zinsen mit einer Laufzeit von 36 Jahren unterstützen. Für diese Verpflichtung erhielt die Pforte tatsächlich nur 189 Mill. Francs. Nach Abschluss dieser Vereinbarung verkaufte der Bankier Mirès tags darauf diese Anleihen zu 63%. Siehe hierzu den Schriftwechsel in GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I: 7303, S. 52 ff. und S. 162 ff., 173 ff.

65 Wetzstein an v. Manteuffel, Berlin, 19. Dezember 1851; II: 766, S. 150R.

66 v. Wildenbruch, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 5 und 6.

Der Minister bekannte sich eindeutig zu Wetzstein: „Ich habe bisher keine Veranlassung gehabt, die persönliche Ehrenhaftigkeit des Wetzstein in Zweifel zu ziehen.“<sup>67</sup>

Zu dem Problem der hohen Konsulatskosten ist hier im Anhang die „Berechnung der amtlichen Ein- und Ausgaben des königlich-preußischen Konsulats im Jahr 1855“<sup>68</sup> – den amtlichen Akten entnommen – als Beispiel einzusehen. Daraus ergibt sich, dass der größte Posten an Einnahmen in Prozessgebühren bestand, während Gehälter, Miete und Geschenke in der Ausgabenseite auffallen. Für das Jahr 1855 sind insgesamt 17.042 Piaster Ausgaben zu errechnen. Dagegen standen dem englischen Konsulat 80.000 Piaster und dem französischen 55–60.000 Piaster zur Verfügung<sup>69</sup>. Die erforderliche Differenz zu den für die Lebenshaltungskosten notwendigen Mitteln musste Wetzstein privat aufbringen.<sup>70</sup>

Bei der Durchsicht der amtlichen Schreiben von Wildenbruchs nach Berlin fällt eine offensichtlich<sup>71</sup> von Manteuffel verfasste Bleistiftnotiz auf, die sich am Rand des Briefes vom 19. Juli 1858<sup>72</sup> an von Manteuffel, befindet: „echt wildenbruchsch! Phrasen, Hochmuth, Mangel an Substanz“. Diese Notiz lässt aufhorchen und die von Wildenbruch an Wetzstein geäußerte Kritik, besonders wegen der Betonung der ‚jüdischen‘ Mitarbeiter Wetzsteins, fragwürdig erscheinen.

Aus den amtlichen Schreiben ist allerdings auch an anderer Stelle heftige Kritik an Wetzstein zu erfahren: Anfang des Jahres 1860<sup>73</sup> schickt der Nachfolger

67 v. Schleinitz an v. Wildenbruch, Berlin, 9. März 1857; II: 767, S. 9, 9a und 10R und GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 81, Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 66 ff.

Auch: Von Schleinitz an v. d. Goltz, Berlin, 6. März 1860: Trotz v. Wildenbruchs Bericht hatte der Minister bis jetzt „keinen Anlass gefunden“ sein Urteil über Wetzstein zu ändern; II: 767, S. 77.

68 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 295–296.

69 Wetzstein an Freiherr v. Rosenberg, Geschäftsführer der Königlichen Gesandtschaft bei der Hohen Pforte etc. in Pera, Damaskus, 3. Juli 1851; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 722, S. 139.

70 Wetzstein hatte errechnet, dass er „jährliche Ausgaben von mehr als 4000 Talern“ hätte; Wetzstein an v. Schleinitz, Berlin, 4. Dezember 1859; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 54R.

71 Das beweist der Vergleich mit Schriftzügen v. Manteuffels in anderen Schreiben.

72 GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 777. (dieses Konvolut hat keine Seitenzählung).

73 o. Datum, in Berlin empfangen am 28. Februar 1860; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 63–69.

Ibid. S. 80R: v. d. Goltz an v. Schleinitz, Buyukdere, 27 Juni 1860: Wetzstein werde „allgemein für einen Wucherer“ gehalten.

von Wildenbruchs in Konstantinopel, der Gesandte Graf von der Goltz,<sup>74</sup> ein Schreiben an den jetzt amtierenden Minister der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Freiherrn von Schleinitz, in dem er ein vernichtendes Urteil über Wetzstein fällt: Er schreibt vom „übeln Ruf“, „skandalöse[n] Vorgang“, „abscheulichsten Wuchergeschäfte[n]“. Von der Goltz hatte schon in Athen Erkundigungen von „unparteiischen Personen“, Reisenden und dem „garnisonierenden preußischen Instrukteur“ (gemeint ist Oberst Geßler<sup>75</sup>) eingezogen. Ihm wäre es ein Anliegen „von solchen Subjekten den königlichen Dienst im Oriente gänzlich zu reinigen“. Er schließt sich der Meinung von Wildenbruchs an, „das Königliche Consulat in Damascus eingehen zu lassen“. Weiterhin kritisiert von der Goltz, dass das Ministerium die Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel im April 1858 angewiesen habe, für Wetzstein die Miete für ein Landhaus im Antilibanon, die entsprechenden Umzugskosten, die Kosten für ein Reitpferd und für einen Kawassen dort zu bezahlen. Das Ministerium hatte diese Zahlungen als „exceptionell“ bezeichnet. Von der Goltz fährt fort, „hier [liegt] ein ganzer Stoß von Aktenstücken über die wenig würdige Stellung, welche der [Herr] Wetzstein einnimmt und über die Art von Privatgeschäften“<sup>76</sup>, über die dann sogar „selbst die türkischen Paschas Klage führen und bereits mehrere Beschwerden gegen ihn bei dem russischen Konsulat eingegangen sind“<sup>77</sup>. Die Anmietung eines Sommerhauses in Maraba im Antilibanon (ca. 15 km nördlich von Damaskus gelegen) und ein Umzug mit Reitpferd und Kawassen nach dort ist eine neue Information zu Wetzsteins Aufenthalt in Damaskus.

Ganz sicher hatte Wetzstein das kostspielige Leben im Orient unterschätzt, sonst hätte er nicht bei seiner Bewerbung um das Konsulat in Damaskus auf ein Gehalt verzichtet. Er hatte sich vor seiner Ausreise vermutlich nicht nach Lebenshaltungskosten und überhaupt dem Leben im Orient erkundigt. Aus heutiger Sicht mutet sein Verhalten befremdlich an, besonders unter dem Aspekt, dass durch den Aufenthalt in Damaskus nicht nur Wetzsteins eigenes Vermögen, sondern auch dasjenige seiner Frau Ernestine aufgebraucht wurde.

74 Robert Heinrich Ludwig Graf von der Goltz (1817–1869), 1848/49 Mitbegründer der Kreuzzeitung; 1859–1862 Gesandter in Konstantinopel; dann Gesandter und bevollmächtigter Minister in St. Petersburg, dort Nachfolger, aber Gegner von Bismarck; politische Orientierung nach Westen, bes. England; überzeugt vom Untergang des Osmanischen Reiches; Otto Graf zu Stolberg Wernigerode, „Goltz, Robert Graf von der“, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Bd. 6, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1964, S. 632–634.

75 Oberst Hermann Geßler, auch Delivar Bey genannt, preußischer Armee-Instrukteur in türkischen Diensten.

76 II: 767, S. 68R.

77 v. d. Goltz an v. Schleinitz, Pera, 26. April 1861; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, 767, II: S. 105R.

Bereits 1850 hatte der königlich-preußische Generalkonsul von Syrien und Ägypten Baron von Pentz in einem Schreiben an von Manteuffel vom 3. Dezember 1850<sup>78</sup>, Wetzsteins Intention zu kündigen betreffend, angemerkt, Wetzstein habe während seines bisherigen Aufenthalts in Syrien „bereits einen beträchtlichen Theil seines ohnehin nicht bedeutenden Vermögens“ verbraucht. Wetzstein würde sich bereit erklären, zwei weitere Jahre in Damaskus zu verbringen, wenn ihm ein „alljährlicher Zuschuß von 1250 Thalern“ (20.000 Piaster)<sup>79</sup> und Heimaturlaub im kommenden Frühjahr gewährt werde.

Baron von Pentz sieht in einer Vertretung Preußens die besondere Notwendigkeit, die Handelsverbindungen auszubauen und den Schutz „einer nicht unbedeutenden Anzahl Preußischer Angehöriger“ zu gewährleisten. Damit die Konsuln „anständig auftreten“ könnten, empfiehlt er „ein Gehalt von 1500 Thalern plus 500 Thaler“ für den „Dolmetscher, Kanzlei und Kawassen“. Ein solches Gehalt erhielt Wetzstein nicht, – erst sein Nachfolger Wilhelm von Herford wurde entsprechend bezahlt.<sup>80</sup> Aber aus dieser Anregung von Baron von Pentz lässt sich vielleicht die großzügigere Verrechnung von Wetzsteins Liquidationen erklären.

Zu Wetzsteins Person ergänzt Baron von Pentz in seinem Schreiben vom 3. Dezember 1850: Wegen Wetzsteins wissenschaftlicher Ausbildung könne ihm der „Mangel an Gewandtheit“ nicht zum Vorwurf gemacht werden. „Immerhin hat er aber durch seinen längeren Aufenthalt in Damaskus sich lokale Kenntnisse erworben, die einem neu Ankommenden abgehe“. Aus diesen Gründen empfiehlt von Pentz, auf Wetzsteins Forderungen einzugehen und ihm die Leitung des Konsulats weiterhin zu überlassen. „Jedenfalls dürfte, wenn die Verhältnisse es noch nicht zulassen, einen tüchtigen Beamten dort hinzusenden, diese provisorische Wahl jeder anderen Combination bei Weitem vorzuziehen sein“. Deshalb hält von Pentz Wetzsteins finanzielle Forderung für vertretbar, denn Wetzstein müsse weiterhin von seinem eigenen Vermögen zu den Lebenshaltungskosten zuschießen.

Wetzstein hat sich seit Beginn seiner Amtszeit in Damaskus finanziell überfordert gefühlt. Dies ist den mehrfachen Demissionsgesuchen zu entnehmen, die Wetzstein an das Ministerium der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten stellte.

78 (Alexandrien), *ibid.*, II: 766, S. 128 ff.

79 v. Rosenberg an das Ministerium der Ausw. Angelegenheiten in Berlin, Pera, 6. August 1851; II: 767, S. 137.

80 Weber an v. d. Goltz, Beirut, 17. Juli 1861; GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 81 Konstantinopel, VI: 278, S. 5; v. d. Goltz an v. Schleinitz, Buyukdere, 26. Juli 1861; II: 767, S. 132 und 2. August 1861; *ibid.*, S. 136.

Sind aus seinen hinterlassenen Papieren nur zwei<sup>81</sup> bekannt, erfahren wir aus den amtlichen Schreiben, dass er sich viermal darum bemühte, den Orient verlassen zu können. Bereits am 1. März 1851, also nach nur rund 12 Monaten Amtszeit in Damaskus, reichte er sein erstes Demissionsgesuch ein.<sup>82</sup> Ein wesentlicher Grund hierfür seien die „großen Ausgaben“; er hoffte auf eine Universitätsstelle in Deutschland. Wetzstein schlägt vor, „den Posten ganz einzuziehen“ und es den königlichen Untertanen („circa 80 Seelen“) freizustellen, bei welchem europäischen Konsulat sie um Protektion nachsuchen. Gegen einen längeren Aufenthalt in Syrien spräche auch der „Anblick von Brutalität, [...] die Entbehrung der heimathlichen Sitte, wie in Städten wie Leipzig und Berlin, den Werkstätten deutscher Humanität und Civilisation“; letztendlich habe ihm die „Romanosche Affaire“<sup>83</sup> die Absicht, sein Amt in Damaskus aufzugeben „vereitelt“.<sup>84</sup> Am 14. Juli 1858 bat er erneut um seine Entlassung, verbunden mit der Bitte, dass „Seine Majestät die Gnade haben [möge, ihm] ein Ordinariat zu verleihen“.<sup>85</sup>

Ein weiteres Demissionsgesuch reichte Wetzstein am 4. Dezember 1859 von Berlin aus dem Königlichen Staatsminister der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Freiherrn von Schleinitz, ein<sup>86</sup>: Als Gründe nannte er die angeschlagene Gesundheit seiner Frau und die „Kostspieligkeit des doppelten Haushalts“. Zwar waren ihm seit 1855 höhere Remunerationen zugestanden worden, aber seine finanzielle Misere konnten diese nicht beheben. Zudem war ihm Damaskus nicht mehr erträglich, „eine Stadt, die des ungebrochenen Fanatismus ihrer Bewohner und der Willkür ihrer Gouverneure wegen“ für ihn „vielleicht der schwierigste Posten in der Türkei“ war. Wetzstein hatte sich von Berlin aus auf den Lehrstuhl für „morgenländische Literatur“ an der Universität in Bonn beworben, was aber erfolglos blieb. Deswegen bewarb er sich auf die Stelle des Konsulats in Smyrna, weil das Klima dort kühler und für seine Familie geeigneter wäre; dieser Antrag wurde mit Schreiben vom 10. Dezember 1859 abgelehnt.<sup>87</sup> Erst seinem vierten Demissionsgesuch vom 26. November 1860<sup>88</sup> wurde schließlich stattgegeben.<sup>89</sup>

81 Ein Dimissionsgesuch 1850, das andere vom 28. November 1860.

82 Wetzstein an Freiherr v. Rosenberg in Pera, Damaskus, 3. Juli 1852; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 766, S. 138–141R (Abschrift).

83 Fall Romano: siehe oben S. 3.

84 Adressat (vermutlich an v. d. Goltz) Wetzstein, Berlin, 14. März 1852; II: 766, S. 154R.

85 Wetzstein an v. Manteuffel, Damaskus; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 30 und 30R.

86 Ibid., II: 767, S. 53 ff.

87 v. d. Goltz an Wetzstein; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 55.

88 Wetzstein an v. Schleinitz; (Damaskus); ibid., II: 767, S. 93.

89 Seine Entlassung wurde am 20. Januar 1861 bestätigt. (v. Schleinitz an v. d. Goltz, Berlin 20.

Die finanzielle Sonderstellung, die ihm das Ministerium eingeräumt hatte, indem ihm umfangreichere Mittel zur Verfügung gestellt wurden als üblich, trug nicht zu einem guten Verhältnis zu seinen Kollegen bei, wie sich aus den amtlichen Schreiben ersehen lässt. Bezüglich der Wertschätzung seiner konsularischen Tätigkeit gingen die Meinungen sichtlich auseinander: während sich die Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel sehr distanziert und kritisch äußerte, bekam Wetzstein vom Ministerium der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten in Berlin Unterstützung<sup>90</sup>, und schließlich von Friedrich Wilhelm IV. zu seiner Entlassung den „rothen Adlerorden vierter Klasse“<sup>91</sup> verliehen „in Anerkennung der unter schwierigen Umständen von Ihnen geleisteten Arbeit“<sup>92</sup>.

Die Differenzen zwischen Wetzstein und seinen preußischen Kollegen, die sich in den amtlichen Akten zeigen, waren Wetzsteins hinterlassenen Aufzeichnungen nicht zu entnehmen. Wenn er von Umständen, die ihm das Leben schwer machten und die ihn schließlich zur Rückkehr nach Berlin bewegten, schrieb, dann bezogen die sich – wie oben dargestellt – auf die unvorhergesehenen gesundheitlichen Probleme seiner Frau Ernestine, auf die finanzielle Situation und vor allem auf die politischen Verhältnisse im Syrien dieser Zeit. Dass es Spannungen um seine Person gegeben hatte, ist ihm sicherlich weder bekannt noch bewusst gewesen, sonst hätte er wohl dazu Stellung genommen. Die Diskrepanzen gehen nur aus den amtlichen Korrespondenzen hervor. Letztendlich haben ihm die Humanitätsideale, die sein Handeln bestimmten, bei den Einheimischen – privat und offiziell – große Sympathien gebracht. Das war für die Stellung Preußens in Syrien sicherlich sehr wichtig.

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Januar 1861; GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 81, Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 147; Wetzstein an v. Schleinitz, Damaskus, 28. März 1861; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 102).

90 v. d. Goltz an den preußischen Staatsminister v. Raumer (Friedrich Ludwig Georg (1781–1873); Verwaltungsjurist, Politiker; 1850–1858 preußischer Minister für Geistliche-, Unterrichts- und Medizinalangelegenheiten), Berlin, 28. August 1858: „... in seiner consularischen Thätigkeit vollständig zu meiner Zufriedenheit“, *ibid.*, II: 767, S. 36.

91 Der zweithöchste Verdienstorden (I–IV) Preußens; die Inhaber hießen ‚Ritter‘. Diesen Orden hatte auch der frühere Consular-Agent in Aleppo für Preußen und Russland, Raphael de Piciotto, am 16. Januar 1859 bekommen; GStA PK, III. HA MdA, II: 767, S. 43.

92 v. Schleinitz an Wetzstein, Berlin, 20. Januar 1861; GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 81, Konstantinopel VI: 277, S. 148.

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Duplicat.

Zur Berechnung der amtlichen Einnahmen und Ausgaben  
des Königl. Consuls in Damaskus im Jahr 1855.

No. 273  
295

I, Quartal (Januar, Februar, März)

Einnahmen		Ausgaben	
Rechnung	Rechnung	Rechnung	Rechnung
1	Kassa	16	
2	Legation in Kassa	32	
3	Legation in Kassa	82	20
4	Legation in Kassa	50	
5	Legation in Kassa	238	20
Summa		419	-
Ausgaben			
1	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	1050	A
2	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	780	
3	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	58	
4	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	78	
1	Legation	95	B
2	Legation	25	20
3	Legation	80	
4	Legation	52	
5	Legation	280	
6	Legation	251	B
7	Legation	513	C
Summa		3132	20
von wem es die Einnahmen in Betrag		419	-
bleibt für den Rest		2713	20
II Quartal (April, Mai, Juni)			
Einnahmen		Ausgaben	
1	Kassa	4	
2	Legation in Kassa	32	
3	Legation in Kassa	46	20
4	Legation in Kassa	22	20
5	Legation in Kassa	64	
6	Legation in Kassa	29	20
Summa		172	20
Ausgaben			
1	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	1050	A
2	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	780	
3	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	48	
4	Monatlich. Gehalt des Vorgesetzten	78	
1	Legation	39	20
2	Legation	26	
Summa		2016	20

2 No. 6. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 7. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 8. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 9. siehe Seite 10  
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2 No. 17. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 18. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 19. siehe Seite 10  
2 No. 20. siehe Seite 10

ABB. 16.1 Berechnung der amtlichen Ein- und Ausgaben des königlich-preussischen Consuls im Jahr 1855, GSTA PK, III  
HA MINISTERIUM DER AUSWÄRTIGEN ANGELEGENHEITEN, II NR. 766,  
BL. 295A



Monat	Tatum	by außerordentliche Ausgaben	tausend	hundert	graben	Balanz	Caution
1	30	Bringspote	75	56	20		
2	30	Bringspote			48	20	
3	10	Pfennschreiberei			32		
4	22	Eintragsbuch			53		
5	23	Miete von Pferde zum Eintragsbuch			120		
6	25	Eintragsbuch in Serai			45		
7	30	Eintragsbuch in Serai			200		
		Summe in Serai			792		
		Maraba eintragsbuch			5777		
		Summe			364	20	
		Summe			8412	20	
IV Quartal (Okt. Novbr, Decbr)							
Einnahme.							
1		Posten			40		
2		Eintragsbuch von Serai			32		
3		Eintragsbuch von Serai			64		
4		Eintragsbuch			16		
5		Eintragsbuch			231	30	
		Summe			383	30	
Ausgaben.							
y ordentl. Ausgaben.							
1	31	Verwaltung. Gehalt des Kassiers			1050		
2	31	Verwaltung. Gehalt des Kassiers			780		
3	31	Verwaltung. Gehalt des Kassiers			48	10	
4	30	Verwaltung. Gehalt des Kassiers			78		
y außer ordentliche Ausgaben.							
1	30	Bringspote in Monat Oktober			12		
2	31	Bringspote in Monat November und December			26	20	
3	31	Bringspote			20	20	
4	20	Pfennschreiberei			38	30	
5	1	Winterbedarf an Brennholz für die Caspi			457		
6	1	Wegz. an Posten für die Mauern der Caspi			395		
		Summe			2006	10	
		Summe			383	30	
		Summe			2522	20	

AD no. 7. Wie in vorigen Jahren  
 ist die 4. und 5. Klasse der Militär-  
 Pensionen mit ein Pensionat-  
 begehrt. Die Pension 792 fl. sind für  
 Miete von Maitelgen (210) 2. und  
 3. Klasse incl. 5. Klasse (552), in  
 der Caspi-Bez. 4 Monate lang.  
 Einmal wünschenswert auf Maraba  
 Kas.

ABB. 16.3 Berechnung der amtlichen Ein- und Ausgaben des königlich-preussischen Konsulats im Jahr 1855, GStA PK, III  
 HA MINISTERIUM DER AUSWÄRTIGEN ANGELEGENHEITEN, II NR. 766,  
 BL. 296A

# Living in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Damascus

## *Insights into the Urban Residences of Foreigners and Locals*

Anke Scharrahs

### 1 Introduction

The Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein spent most of his life between spring 1849<sup>1</sup> and spring 1862<sup>2</sup> in Damascus, where he had been appointed the first Prussian consul.<sup>3</sup> During his stay in Damascus he cultivated an extensive network of locals and foreigners.<sup>4</sup> From Ingeborg Huhn's thorough studies of Wetzstein's correspondence, diaries and contracts, a large number of his contacts can be identified.<sup>5</sup> Some of these people belonged to the most influential and wealthiest individuals of the region, for example Šahāda Stambūlī and his son Ya'qūb,<sup>6</sup> Menāḥīm Fārḥī,<sup>7</sup> 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī and Miḥā'il Mišāqa.

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- 1 Ingeborg Huhn, "Über Juden im osmanischen Damaskus um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts – nach Dokumenten aus dem Nachlaß Wetzstein", in *Festgabe an Josef Matuz: Osmanistik – Turkologie – Diplomatie*, ed. Christa Fragner and Klaus Schwarz, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1992, pp. 77–100, here p. 79; Ingeborg Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein: Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861)*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2016, p. 11.
  - 2 Ingeborg Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preußischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861): dargestellt nach seinen hinterlassenen Papieren*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1989, p. 4 and *Ead.*, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 11.
  - 3 During Wetzstein's service as Prussian consul he went on three journeys to Europe and on seven journeys through Syria (*Bilād al-Šām*), so that the time he spent in Damascus amounts to approximately ten years out of the total time span of twelve and a half years of his appointment. See Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 4 and *Ead.*, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 11.
  - 4 See the comprehensive studies about Wetzstein's stay in Damascus in Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein* and *ead.*, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*.
  - 5 Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*; Huhn, "Juden"; Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*.
  - 6 Šahāda Stambūlī (also known as "Natan al-Islāmbūlī" from the preserved signatures in the Arabic documents in Wetzstein's papers) was one of the most important tax farmers (*sūbāšī*) of the province Damascus. His son Ya'qūb, also a tax farmer, was said to be one of the wealthiest men in Syria in 1859. See Huhn, "Juden", pp. 80–81. According to Jacques Stambouli, "La Maison Stambuli, Histoire d'une maison juive à Damas", *L'Arche, mensuel du judaïsme français*, no. 594, November 2007, p. 73, n. 16, the previous name of the Stambūlī family was

Among his European contacts who lived at this time in Damascus were the British consuls Richard Wood and James Brant, the French consuls de Ségur-Dupperon, Edmond de Barrère and Maxime Outrey, the Austrian-Hungarian consul Georg Pfäffinger, the Prussian officer Hermann Geßler, and the Irish missionary Smylie Robson.<sup>8</sup>

The homes of the influential locals as well as of the foreigners were not merely private residences, they also had semi-public spaces where business partners were received, political conversations held, law cases discussed and private visitors welcomed. Such activities happened in rooms that were specifically designed and furnished for the reception of guests. These spaces were the most valuable rooms of the homes and thus reflected the owners' social status, financial power, wealth and self-image. The residences of the local elite, as well as of the powerful foreigners, were truly impressive palaces consisting of spacious courtyards surrounded by elaborately embellished and furnished interiors.<sup>9</sup> A significant number of residences of Wetzstein's contemporaries can still be traced in historic photographs, drawings, maps, travel accounts or

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Lévy. Thanks to Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis (New York) for this information. Based on a handwritten note on two historic photographs of Bayt Stambouli by Bonfils "Damascus. House of a Jew from Constantinople", one can assume that the family Islāmbūli/Stambouli refers to the family's origin in Istanbul. The two photographs are in Harvard College Library, ID nos. HSMCC518, HSMCC519.

- 7 The Fārḥi family was one of the wealthiest and most influential Jewish families in early nineteenth-century Syria, Huhn, "Juden", p. 80. See, for detailed information, Thomas Philipp, "The Farhi Family and the Changing Position of the Jews in Syria, 1750–1860", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1984), pp. 37–52; Najwa al-Qattan, "The Damascene Jewish Community in the Latter Decades of the Eighteenth Century: Aspects of socio-economic life based on the registers of the sharī'a courts", in *The Syrian Land in the 18th and 19th Century: The Common and the Specific in the Historical Experience*, ed. Thomas Philipp, Stuttgart, Steiner, 1992, pp. 197–216; Julie D. Bouchain, *Juden in Syrien: Aufstieg und Niedergang der Familie Farḥi von 1740 bis 1995* [= Hamburger Islamwissenschaftliche und Turkologische Arbeiten und Texte, vol. ix], Münster, Lit, 1996.
- 8 See the list of the most important consuls in Damascus 1848–1862 in Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, pp. 32–33. For Robson and Geßler, see Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 165.
- 9 See the recent studies on Damascene private homes in Ariane Ahmad, *Das städtische Hofhaus in Syrien und seine regionale Ausprägung*, PhD thesis, Technische Universität Berlin, 2005; *Bayt al-'Aqqad: The History and Restoration of a House in Old Damascus* [= Proceedings of the Danish Institute Damascus, vol. iv], ed. Peder Mortensen, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 2005; Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808–1918)*, two vols. [= Proceedings of the Danish Institute Damascus, vol. v], Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 2009; Anke Scharrahs, *Damascene 'Ajami Rooms: Forgotten Jewels of Interior Design*, London, Archetype Publications, 2013; Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi and the Sephardic Palaces of Ottoman Damascus in the Late 18th and 19th Centuries* [= Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research, vol. 72], Oxford, University of Oxford, 2018.

as present buildings. This paper follows in Wetzstein's footsteps and aims to introduce some of the historic private houses that the politician, scholar and connoisseur encountered during his stay in Damascus' Old City.

## 2 A Short Introduction to the Architectural Structure and Decoration of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Damascene Houses

In the mid-nineteenth century, the number of inhabitants of Damascus is estimated at between 80,000<sup>10</sup> and 140,000,<sup>11</sup> and approximately 10,000 private homes can be assumed to have existed.<sup>12</sup> Most of these houses were built or renewed after the two devastating earthquakes of 1759 – existing structures were transformed following these disasters and building materials from previous centuries and periods, dating even back to antiquity, were reused.<sup>13</sup> Until the mid-nineteenth century, Damascene private houses showed very little in the way of exterior decoration, with unembellished, whitewashed walls facing the street (fig. 17.1). The first floor often overhung the street by about a metre, and was supported by wooden beams. The historic entrance door was usually small, slightly less than a metre wide, and was adorned with a doorknob and nails forming a decorative pattern. The plain exteriors of the houses provided few hints of the beauty that lay within, in particular the opulence of the interior decoration.

Upon entering a private house, the visitor first had to pass through a small secondary courtyard (*barrānī*) or through a narrow corridor (*dihlīz*), often turning one or two corners before reaching the inner courtyard (*ǧuwwānī*). Both entry types prevented a direct view from the street into the private inner space of the house. But as soon as the richly decorated inner courtyard had been reached, a multi-coloured stone pavement, a sparkling central fountain, and lush greenery became apparent (figs. 17.2, 17.3, 17.8). The scents of bitter orange and lemon trees, jasmine or roses, with flowers often covering entire walls, welcomed the visitor. A great soaring hall on the southern side of the courtyard opened to the north, drawing the visitor into its cool shadows. This space, called the *īwān* (figs. 17.3, 17.18), was often 10 metres high, encompassing the entire

10 Zuhair Ghazzal, *L'économie politique de Damas durant le XIXe siècle: Structures traditionnelles et capitalisme*, Damascus, Institut Français de Damas, 1993, p. 38.

11 Huhn, "Juden", p. 89; Nu'mān Qasāṭīlī, *Kitāb al-Rawḍa al-ǧannā' fi Dīmašq al-fayḥā*, Beirut, s.n., 1876, p. 8.

12 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, p. 228.

13 See the comprehensive study of Stefan Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, pp. 227–415.

height of the house and effectively retaining the night air to cool the space for the next day. The *īwān* served most of the year as the main living room. Here the guests were received and welcomed with coffee, tea, sweets, fruits or a water pipe. On all sides of the courtyard, numerous windows with metal grilles opened onto the rooms used in daily family life, arranged in one or two floors surrounding the courtyard. The rooms were usually accessible directly from the courtyard, either through doors or via inner or outer stairs. The largest of these rooms, called a *qā'a* (Arabic: hall, salon), was also used for the reception of guests (figs. 17.4–6, 17.11), especially if it was already too hot in the *īwān* during the day, or in the intense heat of midsummer. The *qā'a* was divided into a ground-level entry space (*'ataba*) and a raised seating platform (*ṭazar*) approximately 40 cm high – the latter lavishly furnished with mattresses and cushions along the walls as well as with a central carpet. The ceiling was also divided by a wooden or stone arch separating the *ṭazar* and *'ataba*.

The walls of the rooms and the courtyard were beautifully adorned with various materials and decorative techniques:<sup>14</sup> horizontal bands of finely plastered stones (*ablaq*) in three colours – white, earth-orange and dark grey; finely patterned floral and geometric designs made with tinted plaster pastes (also called *ablaq*); partially painted and gilded stone reliefs, stone mosaic, mother-of-pearl inlays and tiles. The ceilings and parts of the walls were made from gilded and painted wooden beams and panels decorated in the *'aḡamī* technique.<sup>15</sup> Together with the sumptuous textile furnishing, with fine mattresses, carpets and cushions, the interiors were impressive spaces of a refined urban lifestyle.

None of the houses that Wetzstein might have visited in Damascus's Old City is entirely preserved with all its mid-nineteenth-century decoration and appearance intact. Damascene private homes were never static, unalterable

14 See the detailed study about forgotten decorative techniques of Damascene eighteenth- and nineteenth-century homes in Damascus in Anke Scharrahs, *Polychrome Ausstattungen von Wohnräumen in syrischen Stadthäusern des 17. bis 19. Jahrhunderts: Zu Kunsttechnik und Erhaltungsfragen von 'aḡamī-Interieurs*, PhD thesis, Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden, 2013, <http://www.hfbk-dresden.de/studium/studiengaenge/fakultaet-2/restaurierung/wissenschaftliche-arbeiten-und-publicationen/dissertationen/daehne/scharrahs/> (retrieved 28 January 2019) (full length study in German) and Scharrahs, *Damascene* (abridged version in English).

15 *'aḡamī* is the Arabic term for a particular relief technique known as *pastiglia* in Europe using a thick-flowing paste. The motifs were partially overlaid with metal-leaves, vibrant paints and translucent glazes. The term al-*'aḡamī* is used to describe this decorative technique as a whole as well as the raised ornaments alone, and also provides a commonly-used name for this type of interior, termed "*aḡamī* rooms".

structures.<sup>16</sup> They rather resemble living organisms that were constantly changed to suit the needs of the occupants. Therefore, the houses quietly tell stories to the attentive observer about the former residents and their living conditions, because each generation adapted parts or the entire house to match their personal needs or preferences. Today, we might note that the surfaces of the walls have been sanded down or painted in monochrome colours or with trompe-l'œil curtains and columns, and covered with mirrors, that doors have been repainted or replaced, and windows have been inset with glass instead of metal grilles and wooden shutters. The plants, the fountains or the flooring in courtyards have also changed. But certain eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century architectural elements and/or decorative features of these houses can still be discovered. By putting these pieces of the puzzle together we can glimpse the mid-nineteenth-century atmosphere and layout of these spaces and better understand how Wetzstein and his contemporaries lived and worked.

### 3 Wetzstein's Residences in Damascus

Wetzstein's correspondence with the Prussian Prime Minister von Manteuffel indicates that Wetzstein aimed to make the Prussian Consulate a popular place of interest. He adopted many local customs and always had a full house, extending his hospitality widely.<sup>17</sup> Wetzstein used various mansions in the Old City of Damascus for this purpose. In 1849 he lived in a place that he rented from his chancellor, Šaḥāda Stambūlī. But it is not clear from his papers whether he lived in a part of the famous Bayt Stambūlī (see below and figs. 17.10, 17.11) or if he rented rooms in another of Stambūlī's properties.<sup>18</sup> In May 1850 he rented a residence in the al-Buzūriyya quarter, the area around the spice bazaar, for eighteen months.<sup>19</sup> The leasing contract states that the house stood beside the

16 See the comprehensive study on changes of living conditions and taste in nineteenth-century Damascus in Weber, *Damascus*.

17 Contribution from Ingeborg Huhn in this publication.

18 Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 57 and *ead.*, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 52.

19 Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 57 and *ead.*, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 52; Ingeborg Huhn and Dorothee Sack, "Das erste königlich-preußische Konsulat in Damaskus", *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 11 (1999), pp. 267–284, here pp. 270–271. The lease contract is archived in the Handschriftenabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, published by Huhn / Sack, "Konsulat", 1999, p. 269, fig. 1.

Ḥān As‘ad Bāšā al-‘Azm,<sup>20</sup> the famous trade building on the east side of the spice bazaar, Sūq al-Buzūriyya. Although there are only a few private homes in this area, this information is not sufficient to identify the house securely. Most likely it was one of the houses located north of the Ḥān As‘ad Bāšā al-‘Azm.<sup>21</sup> From November 1851 until July 1852 Wetzstein was on home leave in Germany.

After his return to Damascus, he moved, in August 1852, to an opulent courtyard house, said by contemporaries to be one of the most beautiful houses in Damascus,<sup>22</sup> where he lived until he moved back to Europe in 1862. Based on Wetzstein’s sketch of the ground floor map of his house, Dorothée Sack identified his home as the northern courtyard of the house known since the 1960s as Bayt Ḥalīd al-‘Azm.<sup>23</sup> Today the house is used as the Museum of the City of Damascus (Historical Museum Damascus); and the two southern courtyards house the head office of the National Archive (*Markaz al-Watā’iq al-Tāriḥiyya*). This house was largely transformed during renovation works carried out between 1970 and 1983.<sup>24</sup> Only a few parts of the house are preserved with their original interior decoration, as shown in figs. 17.4–7. However, these images give a false impression of the house’s mid-nineteenth-century appearance because the wall panelling and ceilings are now covered with dark brown varnish, concealing the original bright and vibrant colour scheme and the sparkling metal-leafed surface details. When comparing this to the images of the rare, but still existing, original panels in other houses<sup>25</sup> (figs. 17.20, 17.25–27) or the meticulous drawings of James W. Wild drawn in 1847 (figs. 17.17, 17.22) one can better imagine the opulence of interiors of the mid-nineteenth century.

One particular exceptional feature of Wetzstein’s home that survived was essential to identifying the house.<sup>26</sup> It is the labyrinth fountain (fig. 17.7) that

20 Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 57; Huhn / Sack, “Konsulat”, pp. 270–271; Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 52.

21 See the map fig. 2 in Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, p. 270.

22 Julius Heinrich Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, vol. 1, Leipzig, von Veit & Comp., 1865 (2nd ed.), p. 68.

23 Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 60; Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, pp. 271–282; Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, pp. 52–54. Wetzstein’s landlords were the heirs of Sulaymān Killār Aminī, see Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 58; Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, pp. 279–282; Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 298; Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, pp. 52–54.

24 Many parts of the building were changed, and ‘aḡamī panels and ceilings originating from other houses were installed in the house, see Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 298.

25 See Scharrahs, *Damascene*, pp. 194–214, 222–237.

26 Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, p. 276.

Wetzstein noted in the sketch of his house as the “Schlangensbassin”<sup>27</sup> (“snake basin”) in the room located in the north-west corner of his house. Only a few examples of water labyrinth fountains existed and were thus famous and admired as specific attractions.<sup>28</sup> The labyrinth fountain is also mentioned in Julius Heinrich Petermann’s detailed description of Wetzstein’s house. Petermann lived in the house in 1852 as Wetzstein’s guest.<sup>29</sup> In the room with the labyrinth fountain, which Wetzstein called the “Schlangensaal”<sup>30</sup> (“snake salon”), other preserved architectural elements most likely date to the mid-eighteenth century: the elaborate stone mosaic pavement of the entry space surrounding the fountain (fig. 17.7) and the outer walls of the first floor showing finely cut masonry windows in the exterior facade (figs. 17.8, 17.9), which were rarely found in Damascene homes.

#### 4 The Residences of Wetzstein’s Contemporaries

Some of the houses that Wetzstein visited retain their architectural structure in significant parts, for example the house of Wetzstein’s chancellor Šaḥāda Stambūlī, two houses of the Fārḥī family, the sequence of five houses of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā’irī, the house of the merchant family al-Qazīḥa, or the spacious house in which the British consuls Richard Wood and James Brant resided, which is known today as Bayt Sa’īd al-Quwatlī. The following paragraphs introduce these homes and some of the decorative features preserved.

#### 5 The House of Šaḥāda Stambūlī

One of the houses that Wetzstein probably encountered during his first days in Damascus was the home of Šaḥāda Stambūlī.<sup>31</sup> It was one of the grandest and most opulent residences of its time because of the financial power

27 Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, pp. 276–278; see Wetzstein’s note “Schlangensbassin” in Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, p. 276, fig. 4.

28 The other known labyrinth fountain is found in the As’ad Bāšā al-‘Azm Palace, in the large northern courtyard.

29 Petermann, *Reisen*, vol. 1, p. 68.

30 See Wetzstein’s note “Schlangensaal” in Huhn/Sack, “Konsulat”, p. 276, fig. 4.

31 The members of Šaḥāda Stambūlī’s family were already protégés of the Prussian consulate between 1842 and 1848; see Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 55. *Stambouli* was the contemporary representation in Latin script of the Arabic name *Islāmbūlī*, both referring to the city Istanbul. Later this house was known as Bayt Niyadu – see Weber, *Damascus*,

of its owner.<sup>32</sup> Photographs taken by the firm Maison Bonfils (fig. 17.10)<sup>33</sup> and others<sup>34</sup> provide an impression of the spacious courtyard and interiors in the late nineteenth century – but these images document the house after it was refurbished between 1865 and 1872.<sup>35</sup> However, based on stylistic and technical studies and comparison with other houses, we can safely assume that the courtyard's marble mosaic flooring, the fountain and the ground floor facades with their horizontal stripes and fine mortar paste decoration, as shown in fig. 17.10, were already present in Wetzstein's time.<sup>36</sup>

During the renovation of the 1860s/70s, the first floor's layout was changed, when rooms with large windows were added (fig. 17.10). This was a common way of modernising Damascene homes in the period between the 1860s and 1880s and is evident in many other houses. Further impressive features of Bayt Stambūli's modernisation are the landscape paintings<sup>37</sup> and the opulent, wavy cornice, both adorning the courtyard's facades (fig. 17.10). In the time when Wetzstein lived there the courtyard facades were presumably rather similar those in the drawings that James W. Wild made of three other Damascene residences in 1847 (figs. 17.15, 17.21). The upper parts of the walls were commonly plastered and whitewashed with only few small windows in the walls (figs. 17.8, 17.18).

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vol. II, p. 391 – because the house was purchased by Joseph Liniado; see Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*, p. 145.

32 See contributions about this house in Weber, *Damascus*; Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*.

33 *In Arab Lands: The Bonfils Collection of the University of Pennsylvania Museum*, Introduction by Douglas M. Haller, Cairo, The American University in Cairo Press, 2000. Image on the book cover.

34 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 392, figs. 1108–1111.

35 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 391. See also the detailed chapter about the house in Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*, pp. 145–156.

36 The design and the material used for these decorative features are made in the style of the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century.

37 Landscape paintings on courtyard facades were particularly rare, but commonly found inside the interiors. See the comprehensive study on Damascene wall paintings in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, pp. 287–301, 322–325, 434–441; see also Stefan Weber, “Images of Imagined Worlds, Self-Image and Worldview in Late Ottoman Wall Paintings”, in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, Würzburg, Ergon, 2002, pp. 145–171.

## 6 The Fārḥī Houses

Among Wetzstein's close business partners were Menāḥīm and Ya'qūb Fārḥī, leading members of one of the wealthiest and most influential Jewish families in early nineteenth-century Syria.<sup>38</sup> Two impressive homes of the Fārḥī family still exist in Damascus' Old City, Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim<sup>39</sup> and Bayt Fārḥī/Daḥ-dāḥ.<sup>40</sup> The first, Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim, is documented in a painting (fig. 17.12) which the British artist Frederic Leighton made after or during his journey to Damascus in 1873<sup>41</sup> and which accurately depicts the atmosphere of a splendid Damascene house in the early nineteenth century. Most of the house was built in the 1790s.<sup>42</sup> The German traveller Otto Richter visited the house of Raphael Fārḥī<sup>43</sup> in 1805 and described the house as follows:

The house of the very important man announces itself very modestly from outside, but surprises greatly with its splendour inside. A spacious courtyard paved with coloured marble, and decorated with water basin, orange trees and flowers, is surrounded by beautiful covered diwans and leads to the living rooms, which are already richly decorated from outside. I was well received and accompanied by the host to the salon, in the centre of which a chandelier was hanging, and around which were three higher estrades [seating platforms], which nearly gave the room a cross

38 See Philipp, "Farhi Family"; Huhn, "Juden"; al-Qattan, "Damascene Jewish Community"; Bouchain, *Juden*; Christina Weber, *Die Jüdische Gemeinde im Damaskus des 19. Jahrhunderts: Städtische Sozialgeschichte und osmanische Gerichtsbarkeit im Spiegel islamischer und jüdischer Quellen*, Berlin, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2011.

39 See the comprehensive study about Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim and other Jewish houses in Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*. Another source of compressed information is Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 393.

40 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 387.

41 The painting is known by two titles: "Gathering citrons" or "Old Jewish Quarter, Damascus". The depicted courtyard scene was identified by Stefan Weber as being Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim. The painting is published in Brigid Keenan, *Damascus: Hidden Treasures of the Old City*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2000, p. 95 and Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*, p. 2. Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis assumes that Leighton probably painted it in 1874 after his return to London. He also did a little sketch which could have been done there; see Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*. Leighton also mentions having photos done of the houses in an 1873 letter to his father – but none of these survive. Thanks for this information to Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis.

42 See also Macaulay-Lewis, *Bayt Farhi*, p. 107.

43 The description most likely refers to Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim because the described interior with three raised seating areas is an architectural space that is only present in one of the Fārḥī houses, in Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim.

shape. This raised part was decorated below with mother-of-pearl, [and] covered with beautiful mats, carpets and cushions. The walls were shining with gilded decoration on marble or azure, and partly covered with wooden panels similar to the ceilings, which were inlaid with mother-of-pearl, gold and mirrors.<sup>44</sup>

The interior described by Richter is the impressive large *qā'a* in the north wing of the main courtyard (fig. 17.13). The entire house, and in particular the *qā'a*, suffered the unfortunate fate of being neglected in the decades before 2006 (fig. 17.13), when the house was bought, renovated and partially restored by Hakam Roukbi, with the intention of opening it as a hotel. Only few parts of the original interior decoration are preserved, but these still provide a glimpse into its former elegance and beauty. The house's general structure and the stone flooring still preserve the atmosphere of the time when Wetzstein visited the Fārḥī house (fig. 17.14).

## 7 The House of the British Consul

Another house that Wetzstein must have visited would have been the British consulate. Between the 1840s and approximately 1865,<sup>45</sup> the consulate was located in a house known today as Bayt Sa'īd al-Quwatlī<sup>46</sup> (figs. 17.15–20). This house, located north of the Umayyad Mosque, was one of the largest and grandest private residences in Damascus and incorporates significant architectural elements from the fifteenth to the late nineteenth centuries.<sup>47</sup> The majority of the existing structure was built by one of the most influential *'ulamā'* families, the al-Murādī, around 1800.<sup>48</sup> Today the house is named after the wealthy merchant Sa'īd al-Quwatlī,<sup>49</sup> who bought the house around 1866.<sup>50</sup>

44 Otto Freiherr von Richter, *Wallfahrten im Morgenlande: Aus seinen Tagebüchern und Briefen dargestellt von Johann Philipp Gustav Ewers*, Berlin, Reimer, 1822, pp. 142–143. Translation of the author.

45 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 483.

46 Cadastral number XVIII/1–100. The ground plan of the house is published in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, p. 372, fig. 513. Details about the house, see in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, pp. 371–374, 376–377; vol. II, pp. 482–484.

47 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, pp. 482–484.

48 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 482.

49 Sa'īd al-Quwatlī (1822–1874) was described as one of the wealthiest and most important traders in Damascus. See a photograph of him in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, p. 65, fig. 15.

50 Evidenced by several court records, see Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, p. 373.

The building is documented in photographs,<sup>51</sup> maps,<sup>52</sup> written sources<sup>53</sup> and in an extraordinarily interesting set of thirteen meticulous watercolour pencil drawings<sup>54</sup> (figs. 17.15–17) by the British architect James William Wild (1814–1892), who visited Damascus in 1847. The watercolours, labelled the “consul’s house”, are mounted into an album together with drawings of two other Damascene houses and a second set of drawings made during a travel to Seville.<sup>55</sup> The album was given to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1938 by James W. Wild’s daughter, Elisabeth H.M. Wild. James Wild stayed in Damascus at least from March until May 1847, as the dates of the drawings indicate.<sup>56</sup> The watercolours are of outstanding value because they document the house before major changes were made by the merchant Saʿīd al-Quwatlī in the 1860/70s. The colour drawings show the house’s state in the years around 1800, as inscriptions in various interiors indicate.<sup>57</sup>

All of Wild’s watercolours document a now-forgotten aspect of Damascene urban interior decoration: the clear, fresh colour scheme, dominated by the interplay of soft tones of light blue, orange, pink, dark grey and off-white, contrasting with glossy gilded details and silvery shimmering mother-of-pearl inlay (figs. 17.15–17). Bayt Saʿīd al-Quwatlī is one of the few houses in Damascus’ Old City in which the original surface decoration with its light polychromy is

51 The British photographer Francis Bedford (1816–1894) visited the house in 1862 during his trip to Damascus when he accompanied Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), oldest son of Queen Victoria, on a four-month trip from Cairo to Constantinople. See his photograph of the house in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, p. 374, fig. 516; also, Badr el-Hage, *Des photographes à Damas 1849–1918*, Paris, MARVAL, 2000, p. 156.

52 See the British Consulate, mentioned for example in Porter’s map published in 1855: Josias Leslie Porter, *Five Years in Damascus*, two vols., London, John Murray, 1855, vol. II, p. 61; and in Emmanuel Guillaume Rey’s map drawn in the winter of 1859/60 published, for example, in Jean-Luc Arnaud, “Corpus cartographique pour l’histoire de Damas, Syrie, à la fin de la période ottomane (1760–1924)”, *Imago Mundi: The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, 53 (2001), pp. 46–70, here p. 56.

53 See a list of references in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 484.

54 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Inventory numbers E. 3849–1938–E. 3861–1938.

55 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Inventory numbers E. 3849–1938–E. 4083–1938. See the detailed study about Wild’s Damascus drawings, forthcoming article by the author in the *v&A Online Journal*.

56 Five drawings of another studied house, the yet unidentified “Bayt Mohamed Aga Chaweesh, Damascus”, are dated by Wild’s pencil notes: no. E. 3874–1938, E. 3877–1938, E. 3878–1938, E. 3883–1938 is inscribed with the date of May 1847, E. 3884–1938 with the date of March 1847. The drawings depicting the “consul’s house” as well as “Mr. Robson’s house” do not contain a date. However, it is very likely that they were also made in the spring of 1847, which hopefully can be proved by future research about Wild’s Damascus journey.

57 Evidenced by dated inscriptions in eight interiors, see Weber, *Damascus*, vol. I, p. 372.

still preserved in certain areas (figs. 17.19, 17.20). Today most surviving interiors appear to have dark brown, muted tones, because they were so often varnished and repainted. The polychromy was often completely removed from the stone reliefs during renovation or restoration projects in the twentieth century, ignoring the fact that these surfaces too were partially painted and gilded. Wild's drawings serve as important documents of the intended appearance of these interiors, helping us to better understand the atmosphere and magical beauty of these rooms – as Wetzstein and others described it.

## 8 The House of Smylie Robson

A second house depicted in Wild's drawings is labelled the house of Mr Robson.<sup>58</sup> This individual can be identified as Reverend Smylie Robson (1816–1884), who was also one of Wetzstein's contacts in Damascus.<sup>59</sup> Robson was a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, who joined the mission in Damascus in 1844<sup>60</sup> and was present there for 25 years. Wild's drawings of Robson's home show details of the courtyard's decoration, a view to the beautiful northern facade of the south wing, including the *īwān* (fig. 17.21), as well as a meticulous ground floor plan of the house. One sketch provides a glimpse into the interior decoration of the house and illustrates the colourful appearance of a wall cabinet in bright blue, orange and gold (fig. 17.22). It is these vibrant colours, fanciful patterns and endlessly alternating motifs, combined in a refined urban taste, that made these houses and interiors so admirable.

The drawings of the courtyard facade<sup>61</sup> indicate that the house belonged to the small group of private residences in which the entire facade was decorated (fig. 17.21) – a sign of the outstanding wealth and financial power of the owner-builder. Such facades are evident, for example, in Bayt Muḥammad Bāšā al-ʿAẓm (fig. 17.2; in the late nineteenth century house of the German consul Ernst Lütticke),<sup>62</sup> in Bayt al-Ḥawrāniyya,<sup>63</sup> and in the governor's residence,

58 As Wild's pencil notes indicate, Mr Robson's house is documented in the drawings with the inventory numbers of the Victoria and Albert Museum E.3890–1938, E.3891–1938, E.3892–1938, E.3893–1938, E.3896–1938, E.3898–1938, E.3899–1938, E.3900–1938.

59 Thanks for the identification of Mr Robson to Ingeborg Huhn (Berlin). See also Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 165.

60 Porter, *Five years*, vol. 1, p. 146.

61 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Inv. nos. E.3890–1938, E.3893–1938.

62 Figs. 1240, 1241 in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 502.

63 Fig. 1258 in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. II, p. 525.

Qaṣr As‘ad Bāšā al-‘Azm.<sup>64</sup> In most other houses only the lower half of the courtyard walls is embellished, while the upper half is plastered and whitewashed (figs. 17.3, 17.8, 17.18). Wild’s drawings provide a unique glimpse into the sophisticated interior decoration of Damascene private residences in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and provide a better understanding of the originally intended surface appearance.

The location of Mr Robson’s house has not yet been identified. According to the American consul Miḥā’il Mišāqa, Smylie Robson lived in 1860 in the outer courtyard of ‘Uṭmān Mardam Bek’s house.<sup>65</sup> Future research may confirm whether Robson, as well as ‘Uṭmān Mardam Bek and his second wife, Farlān bint ‘Alī Āgā Ḥazīna-Kātibī, were living in the same house by 1847. The outstanding decoration of the courtyard facade in Robson’s house depicted in James W. Wild’s drawings (fig. 17.21) may indicate that the house of Mr Robson may have been a part of one of the opulent residences that were located south of *sūq al-ḥamīdiyya/sūq al-ḡadīd*, where ‘Uṭmān Mardam Bek purchased properties.<sup>66</sup> Many homes in this area were damaged during the French bombing in 1925 and were afterwards demolished. It is therefore difficult or impossible to identify the house securely by comparing the ground floor plan drawn by James W. Wild in 1847<sup>67</sup> with the cadastral map. It is quite possible that it was a part of Bayt ‘Abd al-Qādir Mardam Bek,<sup>68</sup> which was located south of *sūq al-ḥamīdiyya / al-ḡadīd*.

64 Figs. 1183–1185 in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 452.

65 Mišāqa mentions that Robson lived in 1860 in the “outer portion of the house of a Turkish Muslim who was married to the daughter of ‘Alī Āgā Ḥazīna-Kātibī”; see Miḥā’il Mišāqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, translated from the Arabic by Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr., Albany, State University of New York Press, 1988, p. 261. According to Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, the Turkish Muslim was ‘Uṭmān Mardam Bek, who married the daughter of ‘Alī Āgā Ḥazīna-Kātibī, Farlān, probably in the mid-1840s; see Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985, p. 139. See information on ‘Uṭmān Mardam Bek in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, pp. 60–61.

66 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, pp. 60–61.

67 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Inventory number E. 3891–1938.

68 House with cadastral no. XVI-320, see Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 470. Weber assumes that this building housed the impressive decoration elements of the exceptional *qā‘a*, which were, in 1958, incorporated into the “Damascene Hall” of the National Museum Damascus.

## 9 House al-Qaziḥa

Among Damascus' prosperous merchant families listed in Wetzstein's records was the Qaziḥa family.<sup>69</sup> The family lived for about 150 years<sup>70</sup> in an historic house<sup>71</sup> on Šahbandar Street in the Old City (fig. 17.1), until the house was sold in 2010. This house is interesting for various reasons. It has three historic 'ağamī interiors – one of them was in outstanding condition in 2008/09 because it retained its original surfaces, which had never been restored, varnished or repainted. The first interior is located in the west wing of the house and dates to 1828.<sup>72</sup> The raised seating platform is furnished with painted and metal-leafed wooden wall panels (figs. 17.23–25), while the ground-level entry space is adorned with wall paintings, including landscapes (fig. 17.26).<sup>73</sup> The two ceilings, as well as the wall panels, are outstanding witnesses of the original vibrant colour scheme, which included brilliant green, blue, pink, violet, red and off-white – all interspersed with sparkling metal-leaf in silvery and golden shades (figs. 17.23–26).

The second 'ağamī interior (figs. 17.28, 17.29) is located in the north-east corner of the first floor and overhangs the entry door to the house (fig. 17.1). Unfortunately, the inscribed date has largely been scratched out from the wooden panel above the eastern window of the south wall, but is still legible. The remains of the numerals indicate the year AH 1217/1802–1803. This date would match the style of the 'ağamī decoration. The room has a *šīša* ceiling similar in style and colour scheme to the *šīša* ceiling in Bayt 'Alī Āgā Ḥazīna-Kātibī/Nižām, which is dated AH 1217/1802–1803.<sup>74</sup> The design of the wall panels (fig. 17.28) shows parallels with the large *qā'a* in Bayt al-Ḥawrāniyya, which is dated AH 1218/1803–1804.<sup>75</sup> The exterior facade of the room has four wooden lattice windows in the oriel-like eastern part of the room overhanging the street (fig. 17.1). According to oral information provided by the Qaziḥa family to the

69 Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 112.

70 During my visits to the house between December 2008 and June 2009, the Qaziḥa family told me that their family had owned the house for about 150 years.

71 Cad.-no. IX-100; the numbering code refers to the French cadastral map created in the 1930s, which is still used as a basis for the identification of buildings in the Old City of Damascus.

72 The date *ramaḍān* 1243 (March–April 1828) is inscribed in the last panel of a set of calligraphy panels running along the three *ṭazar* walls. This panel is the left one of the *ṭazar* south wall.

73 See various images of this interior in Scharrahs, *Damascene*, pp. 194–201, figs. 349–363.

74 Scharrahs, *Damascene*, figs. 105–107, pp. 71–72.

75 Scharrahs, *Damascene*, figs. 377–382, pp. 209–210.

author in 2009, the American consul was hidden in this room during the dramatic 1860 riots. Miḥā'il Mišāqa mentions his rescue in his book about the history of Lebanon:

and then [they] put me in one of his men's houses, where there was no one except an old woman who was the landlady. They send me with the kavass to an upper apartment overlooking the street.<sup>76</sup>

The wall decoration of the third historic interior, which is located in the north wing of the house, was presumably carried out in the 1840s/50s given its stylistic elements. This room was still used as a reception room for guests until 2010 and was furnished in the traditional style, which had vanished by the mid-nineteenth century: a wooden platform, straw-mattresses, a carpet, and a low divan.<sup>77</sup> Such furnishing was still common during Wetzstein's stay in Damascus. However, he noted the increasing use of Western-style furniture, which was influenced by the increased number of Europeans and by Turkish officials appointed to Damascus, who brought the *Francomanie* from Constantinople.<sup>78</sup>

## 10 House of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī

In 1855, the Algerian Sufi, scholar and military leader 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī (1808–1883) moved with his family and his many followers to Damascus and quickly became a highly respected member of the city's society. Shortly after his arrival in Damascus he purchased a row of adjacent five houses<sup>79</sup> in the northern part of the Old City backing onto the river *Barada*. 'Abd al-Qādir refurbished the houses extensively and thus created a unique combination of traditional and contemporary Damascene architecture with neo-Moorish elements influenced by his Algerian origin.<sup>80</sup> The Damascene decoration features include the characteristic three-coloured *ablaq* stripes and marble mosaic flooring (fig. 17.30), multi-coloured paste work with dominant colours of bright green and blue,<sup>81</sup> wooden wall panels, painted canvas ceilings with mirrored

76 Mishāqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder*, p. 257.

77 Scharrahs, *Damascene*, p. 12, figs. 17, 18.

78 Huhn, *Johann Gottfried Wetzstein*, p. 91.

79 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, p. 282, ground floor map fig. 331, p. 283.

80 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, pp. 282–285, figs. 332–335; vol. 11, pp. 499–500, figs. 1236, 1237.

81 Scharrahs, *Damascene*, p. 33, 35, 39, 40, 42, figs. 43, 46, 57, 58, 61.

gilded carvings (fig. 17.31), cornices and wall niches with landscape paintings<sup>82</sup> (figs. 17.32, 17.33), and mother-of-pearl inlaid marble panels.<sup>83</sup> The neo-Moorish style is present in the second house<sup>84</sup> of the line of five seen from the east. Its most noticeable features are the horseshoe arches (fig. 17.34) and tiles;<sup>85</sup> the painted decoration with a geometrical pattern in the interior in the north wing is also neo-Moorish (fig. 17.35).<sup>86</sup>

## 11 Conclusion

In mid-nineteenth-century Damascus consul Wetzstein and his local and foreign contemporaries lived in houses built or furnished between the 1760s and the 1850s. The residences discussed and presented in this article reflect the wealthiest section of society. The majority of the population lived in much simpler homes and under impoverished or extremely impoverished conditions.<sup>87</sup> However, the article aims to highlight an almost forgotten era of sophisticated urban home decor, one which Johann Gottfried Wetzstein admired and used as a setting for his political and humanist efforts as the first appointed Prussian consul in Damascus. The traditional courtyard homes, built on an age-long history and incorporating the influences of the luxurious goods traded through the city, were essential surroundings for successful interactions in Damascene society.

## Acknowledgements

This article would not have been possible without the support of many colleagues and friends. First and foremost, I would like to thank Ingeborg Huhn (Berlin) for her invaluable remarks and for sharing her knowledge about Wetzstein and his contacts. My profound thanks go to Stefan Weber (Museum

82 See the landscape paintings in the upper *iwān* walls in Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, p. 284, fig. 333.

83 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, p. 285, fig. 334.

84 This house has the cadastral number XIX/3–992A, see Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 499, and vol. 1, p. 283, fig. 331.

85 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 1, p. 285, fig. 335.

86 Weber, *Damascus*, vol. 11, p. 499, fig. 1236.

87 See, for example, James Grehan, *Everyday Life & Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus*, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2007, pp. 57–108.

of Islamic Art, Berlin), Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis (New York), Verena Daiber (Bamberg), Wiam al-Aridi (Bergen, Norway), Mechthild Baumeister (New York), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the University of Pennsylvania and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for providing photographs for this article. I want to thank Torsten Wollina, Orient Institute Beirut, for providing me with rare literature, and Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis for editing the manuscript, as well as for sharing information and images on the Jewish houses in Damascus. My thanks also go to Boris Liebrecht (University of Leipzig) and Christoph Rauch (Berlin State Library) for the invitation to contribute, and for providing valuable information and photographs.

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FIGURE 17.1 Old City of Damascus, al-Šahbandar street looking north, with characteristic plain outer walls of traditional houses and overhanging first floor rooms supported by wooden beams. The building on the left side of the street is the house of the merchant family al-Qaziha. The overhanging room in the center of the left wall is the room in which presumably the American consul Miḥā'il Mišāqa was hidden during the 1860s riots  
 PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.2 Courtyard of Bayt Muḥammad Bāšā al-ʿAzm, the house in which the German consul Ernst Lütticke lived in the late nineteenth century. Photochrom print, made between 1890 and 1900

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FIGURE 17.3 Inner courtyard of Bayt 'Alī Āgā Ḥazīna-Kātībī/Niẓām, built around 1800  
 PHOTO: MAISON BONFILS, BETWEEN 1867 AND 1900 © LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON DC



FIGURE 17.4 Bayt Ḥālīd al-ʿAẓm, built around 1780  
 PHOTO: BRYAN WHITNEY, 2008 © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART,  
 NEW YORK



FIGURE 17.5 Bayt Ḥālīd al-ʿAẓm, built around 1780  
 PHOTO: BRYAN WHITNEY, 2008 © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART,  
 NEW YORK



FIGURE 17.6 Bayt Ḥalīd al-ʿAẓm, built around 1780  
PHOTO: BRYAN WHITNEY, 2008 © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART,  
NEW YORK



FIGURE 17.7 Bayt Ḥālīd al-‘Aẓm, labyrinth fountain in the north-west room of the northern courtyard

PHOTO: BRYAN WHITNEY, 2008 © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



FIGURE 17.8 Bayt Ḥālīd al-‘Aẓm, northern courtyard, 1852–1862 Prussian Consulate and home of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein

PHOTO: STEFAN WEBER, 2006



FIGURE 17.9 Bayt Ḥalīd al-ʿAẓm, north-west corner of the northern courtyard, finely cut masonry in the first-floor facade of the “snake salon”  
PHOTO: STEFAN WEBER, 2006



FIGURE 17.10 The inner courtyard of Bayt al-Stambūli

PHOTO: BONFILS, COURTESY OF PENN MUSEUM, IMAGE # 166096

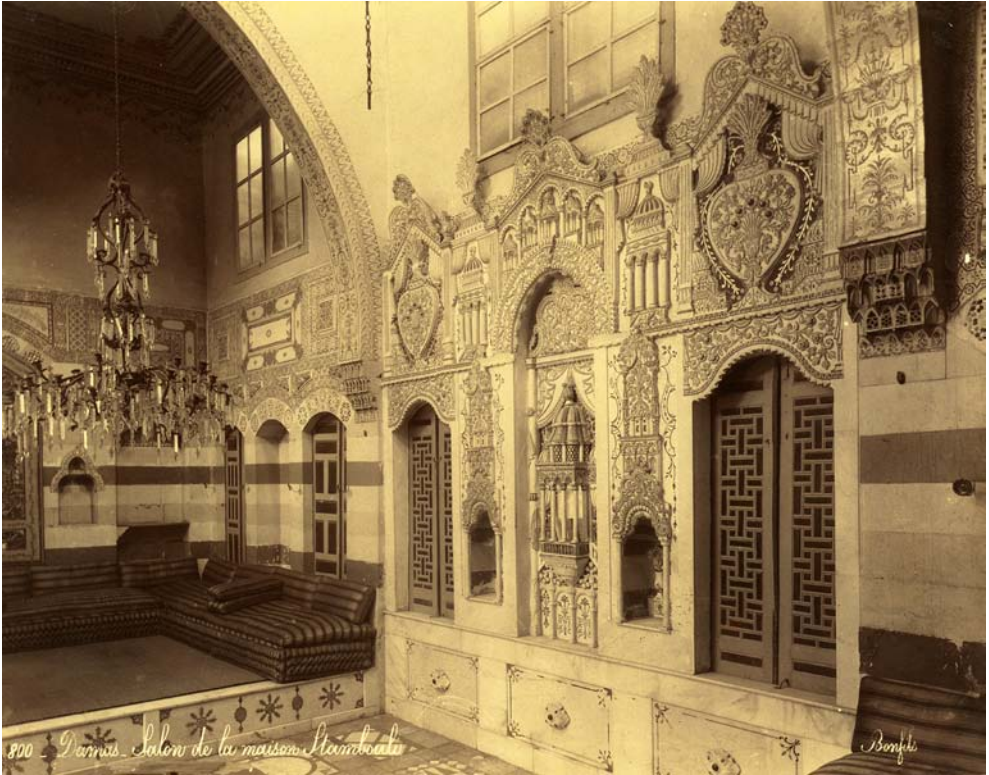


FIGURE 17.11 A qā'a in Bayt al-Stambūli, late nineteenth century, after the 1872 renovation of the house

PHOTO: BONFILS © LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WASHINGTON DC



FIGURE 17.12 “Old Damascus, Jewish Quarter” or “Gathering lemons” by Frederic Leighton, 1873/74, showing the courtyard of Bayt Fārḥi/al-Mu‘allim, view to the south  
PRIVATE COLLECTION © CHRISTIE’S IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES



FIGURE 17.13 Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim, large *qā'a* with three seating areas in the north wing of the large courtyard, detail of the northern *ṭazar* before restoration  
PHOTO: VERENA DAIBER, 2001



FIGURE 17.14 Courtyard of Bayt Fārḥī/al-Mu'allim, view to the south-west corner  
PHOTO: ELIZABETH MACAULAY-LEWIS, 2010



FIGURE 17.15 Watercolour painting by J.W. Wild, E.3853–1938, showing the west facade of the outer courtyard (*barrānī*) of Bayt Saʿīd al-Quwatli/al-Murādi/British Consulate

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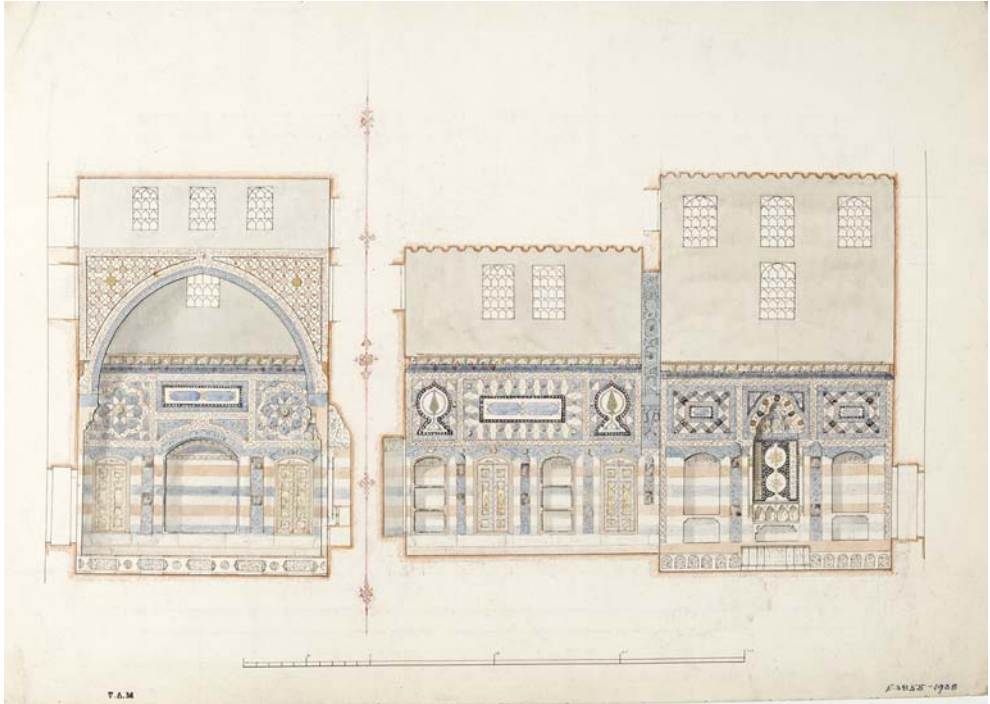


FIGURE 17.16 Watercolour painting by J.W. Wild, E.3855–1938, section view depicting the room east of the *iwān* in the inner courtyard of Bayt Sa'id al-Quwatli/al-Murādi/British consulate

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FIGURE 17.17 Watercolour painting by J.W. Wild, E.3860-1938, showing the painted and gilded wooden wall panelling in an interior of Bayt Sa'īd al-Quwatli/al-Murādi/ British consulate

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FIGURE 17.18 Bayt Sa'īd al-Quwatli/al-Murādī/ British consulate, 1862, historic photograph of the inner courtyard (*ḡuwwānī*) with *īwān* and large fountain, view to the south. The room east of the *īwān* (left of *īwān* in the photograph) is depicted in Wild's drawing E.3855–1938 (fig. 17.16). This photo documents the layout of the house as Wetzstein might have seen it, before the renewal of around 1870. PHOTO: FRANCIS BEDFORD, 1862, © VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM



FIGURE 17.19 Bayt Sa'īd al-Quwatli/al-Murādi, inner courtyard (*ḡuwwāni*), view to the north half of the west courtyard facade  
PHOTO: WIAM AL-ARIDI, 2008



FIGURE 17.20 Bayt Sa'īd al-Quwatli/al-Murādi, inner courtyard (*ḡuwwāni*), detail of a *šīša* ceiling in the north wing  
PHOTO: MECHTHILD BAUMEISTER, 2008

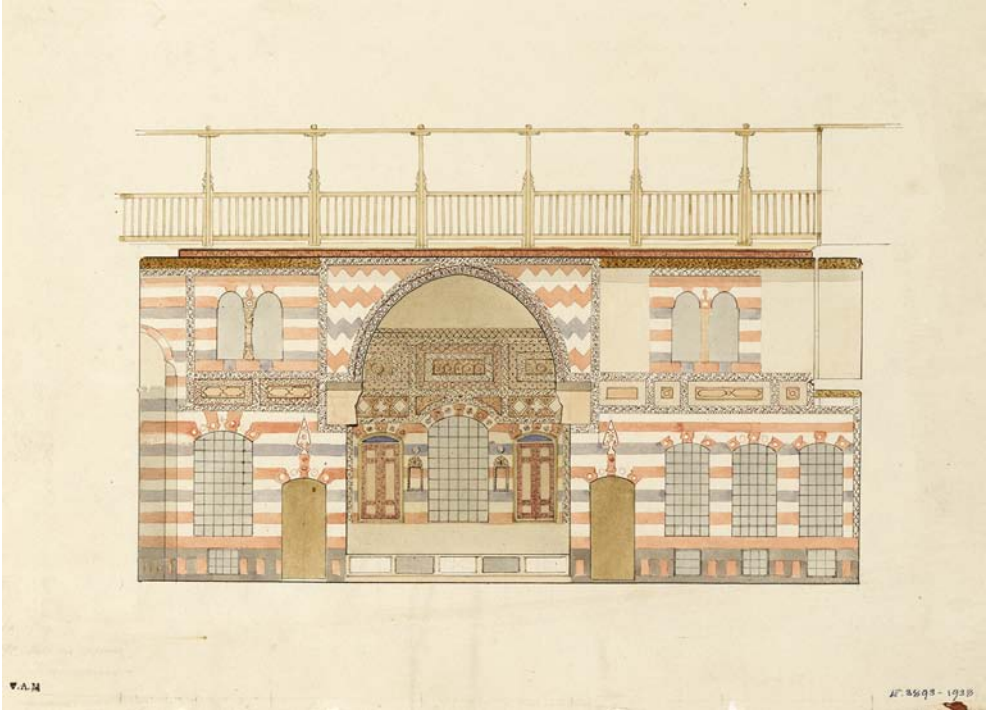


FIGURE 17.21 Watercolour painting by J.W. Wild, E.3893–1938, showing the facade of the south wing of Smylie Robson's house in Damascus  
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM



FIGURE 17.22 Watercolour painting by J.W. Wild, E.3892-1938, showing the painted and gilded wooden wall panelling in an interior of Smylie Robson's house in Damascus

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FIGURE 17.23 Bayt al-Qaziḥa, *qā'a* in the west wing of the house, view to the south-west corner of the raised seating platform (*tazar*), the wall panels are dated in an inscription panel on the south wall to *ramaḍan* 1243 (March–April 1828)  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.24 Bayt al-Qaziḥa, *qā'a* in the west wing of the house, view to the south and west walls of the raised seating platform (*tazar*), with original wall panels and ceiling

PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.25 Bayt al-Qaziha, *qā'ā* in the west wing of the house, central panel of the *ṭazar* ceiling (detail of fig. 17.24); the original surface decoration is in exceptional condition and shows the brilliant blue, white and red colours  
 PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.26 Bayt al-Qaziḥa, qā'ā in the west wing of the house, ceiling of the ground-level entry space (*ataba*), which is preserved with its original light, fresh colour scheme

PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.27 Bayt al-Qaziḥa, *qā'a* in the west wing of the house, view to the north wall of the ground-level entry space (*ataba*) decorated with wall paintings depicting architectural scenes with landscapes, as well as floral and geometrical motifs  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.28 Bayt al-Qazīḥa, *ʿaḡamī* room in the northeast part of the first floor, with view to the north wall

PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.29 Bayt al-Qaziġa, 'aġami room in the north-east part of the first floor, detail of the *šiša* ceiling  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2008



FIGURE 17.30 Bayt 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī, courtyard of the house in the middle of 'Abd al-Qādir's five adjacent houses, view to the south-west with historic marble flooring, fountain and three-coloured *ablaq* stripes on the walls  
PHOTO: STEFAN WEBER, 2006



FIGURE 17.31 Bayt ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā’irī, *iwān* in the courtyard of the house in the middle of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s five adjacent houses, mid-nineteenth-century ceiling  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2011



FIGURE 17.32 Bayt ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā’irī, house in the middle of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s five adjacent houses, room on the first floor of the south wing, west wall with characteristic mid-nineteenth-century niche decoration  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2011



FIGURE 17.33 Bayt 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī, house in the middle of 'Abd al-Qādir's five adjacent houses, room in first floor of the south wing, detail of the ceiling cornice with characteristic mid-nineteenth-century landscape painting  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2011



FIGURE 17.34 Bayt 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'iri  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2011



FIGURE 17.35 Bayt 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ġazā'irī  
PHOTO: ANKE SCHARRAHS, 2011

## Arabist and Consul in Damascus

### *Sir Richard Burton and the Problematic Nature of His Translation of The Thousand and One Nights*

*Robert Irwin*

Though Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890) is famous for many things, including his journey in disguise to Mecca and Medina and his quest with Speke for the source of the Nile, this study is focussed on Burton's time as consul in Damascus, his mastery of Arabic and his translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Johann Gottfried Wetzstein and Burton can be termed Orientalists and both served as consuls in late nineteenth-century Damascus. But in other respects there are no comparisons to be made, only contrasts. When Burton arrived in Damascus, his Arabic was clearly inferior to that of Wetzstein and during Burton's brief tenure of the consulship he showed no interest in Arabic manuscripts or in Arabic literature more generally. It follows that he was poorly prepared to produce an independent translation of the *Nights* and in fact he relied heavily on previous translations, particularly that of his friend, John Payne.

Richard Burton went up to Oxford as an undergraduate in 1840, where he asked to be taught Arabic, but he later claimed that Oxford's Laudian Professor of Arabic had refused to give instruction in the language, except as a lecture to a class and there was no class.<sup>1</sup> That professor must have been Stephen Reay (1782–1861), who, though he was Laudian Professor of Arabic from 1840 to 1849, was primarily a Hebraist. His major publication was a pamphlet, 'Observations on the defence of the Church Missionary Society against the objections of the Archdeacon of Bath' (1818). 'In character he was mild and ineffectual, although remembered by colleagues with affection for his habits of pottering around the library in search of his spectacles and hovering over hot-air gratings in search of warmth.'<sup>2</sup> In those days the Laudian professorship was a sinecure.

1 Richard Burton (tr.), *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, Now Entituled the Book of the Thousand and One Nights*, x vols., Benares (= Stoke Newington), Kamashastra Society, 1885, vol. x, p. 102n.

2 D.S. Margoliouth, rev. Elizabeth Baignet, "Stephen Reay", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, LXI vols., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, vol. XLVI, pp. 243–244.

Burton had then tried to teach himself Arabic, but later claimed that he was hampered by his failure to realise that the language had to be written from right to left and it was only when the great Spanish Arabist Pascual de Gayangos (1809–1897) visited Oxford that Burton was put right on this.<sup>3</sup> Burton left Oxford without a degree and in 1842 took service as an officer in the army of the British East India Company. In India, he studied various oriental languages with *munshis* and he later claimed that “At the end of my first year stationed in Sindh, when I had Persian at my fingers’ ends (and sufficient Arabic and superficial knowledge of Punjabi) ...”<sup>4</sup> He also claimed to be the only officer to have learned Sindhi. After six and a half years he left India and the service of the Company. Allegedly a report he had been commissioned to make on homosexual brothels in Karachi had forced him to leave under a cloud. The only evidence for these brothels and the report on them comes from Burton himself, late in his life, as it appeared in the “Terminal Essay” to *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*.<sup>5</sup>

In 1852, he travelled with the hajj to Mecca. He claimed that he had prepared for this by spending a little time studying Arabic at al-Azhar. This does not seem plausible. Al-Azhar was strictly a Muslim religious institution and, apart from anything else, it was not an Islamic version of Berlitz in the business of offering language courses. But in any case, his Arabic was not good enough for him to dare to impersonate an Arab and in the event he travelled to the Holy Cities in the guise of a Persian-speaking Pathan who had been born to Afghan parents in India. After the hajj, he spent some months in Egypt, perhaps recovering from an unspecified illness and writing up his experiences. In January 1854 he left Cairo, en route for the city of Harar in Somaliland. According to “The Translator’s Foreword” of the *Nights*, he stopped off at Aden where he stayed with his old friend John Steinhauser (1814–1866). It was there Burton claimed that the translation of the *Nights* began. Steinhauser was to do the prose while Burton would do the poetry.<sup>6</sup> It is hard to guess how this project was going to work, since Steinhauser knew no Arabic, but only Hindustani and Burton’s Arabic was not yet that good. (Steinhauser was to die in 1866 while Burton was consul in Brazil.) It was also in Aden that Burton took the India Office

3 Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton K. C. M. G., F. R. G. S.*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1893, p. 77.

4 Burton, *Life*, p. 155.

5 Burton, *Nights*, vol. x, pp. 205–206; cf. Simon Digby, *Richard Burton: The Indian Making of an Arabist*, Jersey, Orient Monographs, 2006, pp. 44–45.

6 Burton, *Nights*, vol. 1, p. ix.

examination in Arabic and, in additional matter appended to the *Nights*, he claims that he passed it.<sup>7</sup> In fact, he failed.<sup>8</sup>

After a decade and a half of adventure and controversy in 1868 Burton was appointed consul in Damascus, a post which he held until 1871. Right from the start there were problems. Sir Henry Elliot (1817–1907), the Turkophile Ambassador to the Porte, did not think an Arabist should be given the Damascus posting. Elliot claimed Muslims would be hostile to an infidel who had travelled to Mecca in disguise. It is also just possible that Elliot feared that Burton, who had influential connections via his wife Isabel, might replace him in Constantinople. Some, though by no means all, of the missionaries in Syria resented Burton's attempts to stop them doing anything that might provoke Muslim fanatics. A trio of Jewish moneylenders who were technically British subjects resented Burton's failure to support them in their legal actions to secure debts incurred by Arab peasants. Although Syria's Jews had indeed been afforded British protection from 1860 onwards, he refused to serve as their "bumbailif". There was also the mysterious business in August of 1871 of hundreds of Shadhili dervishes who apparently wanted to convert to Christianity. More important, Rashid Pasha, the sternly efficient and reforming *Wali* of Syria, was suspicious, perhaps rightly so, of Burton's repeated expeditions in areas of Hauran and Lebanon which were only loosely, if at all controlled by the Ottoman authorities.<sup>9</sup>

But perhaps the chief problems were, first, Burton's exalted opinion of the status and role of a British Consul in Damascus. As far as the Foreign Office was concerned, the chief functions of a consul were to foster British trade and to look after British seamen, and in that respect the Consul-General in Beirut, George Jackson Eldridge was a more important figure than Burton and Eldridge's critical opinions of what Burton was and was not doing in Damascus carried more weight. According to Isabel Burton, her husband as consul had succeeded in reviving English prestige to what it had been in the great days of Sir Richard Wood, Lord Strathnairn and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.<sup>10</sup> But

7 Richard Burton (tr.), *Supplemental Nights to the Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, vi vols., [London], The Burton Club, 1888, vol. vi, p. 416.

8 Jon R. Godsall, "Fact and Fiction in Richard Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah (1855–6)", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 3 (1993), pp. 331–351, here p. 349.

9 Burton, *Life*, pp. 468–606; D.C.M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825*, London, Longman, 1971, p. 40, 52, 145; John Dickie, *The British Consul: Heir to a great tradition*, London, Hurst, 2007, p. 75; John R. Godsall, *The Tangled Web: A Life of Richard Burton*, Leicester, Matador, 2008, pp. 278–310.

10 Burton, *Life*, p. 572.

according to Sir Henry Elliot, Burton “did not understand that the days when Governors General trembled before Consular Dragomans had passed – never it is to be hoped to return”.<sup>11</sup> And Burton’s old, but not uncritical friend, Lord Redesdale recalled that: “As an official Burton was a failure. He was impatient of any control, had no idea of discipline, and as for all the conventionalities, he simply scattered them to the winds”.<sup>12</sup>

Burton viewed his posting as an opportunity to establish himself as a leading, perhaps the leading authority on Syria’s ancient buildings, inscriptions, toponymy, ethnography and geography and to that end he was constantly away in remote areas of Syria and consequently in regular contact with the Druze and Bedouin tribesmen that Rashid Pasha was having such difficulty in controlling. Incidentally, Burton, by now, does seem to have been able to talk to these tribesmen without the need of an interpreter. Quite apart from Rashid Pasha’s legitimate suspicions, this meant that Burton was rarely available to do his job in Damascus. Burton had done the same kind of thing during his previous posting in Brazil, where he used Manaos as his base for expeditions into the interior and often left Isabel to run the consulate. In both Brazil and Syria he was questing for material that would establish his reputation as a great scholar (though the need for money also played some part). After his dismissal from the Damascus consulate in 1871, he swiftly produced (with Charles Tyrwhit-Drake) a learned scrapbook of his travels.<sup>13</sup>

Incidentally, though Burton repeatedly sniped at his predecessors in the field, he had nothing but praise for Wetzstein’s publications. Burton also found a voice in his wife’s *The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine and the Holy Land*.<sup>14</sup>

While he was still in Damascus in 1871 Burton had been visited in Damascus by his old friend Lord Redesdale (incidentally, the grandfather of the famous Mitford girls). Redesdale, writing decades later claimed that he was then shown the opening chapters of Burton’s translation of the *Nights*.<sup>15</sup> But Redesdale, who knew no Arabic, was in no position to assess what he was shown. It is also note-

11 Elliot to Granville no. 117, 9th September, 1871, quoted in Max L. Gross, *Ottoman Rule in the Province of Damascus, 1860–1909*, Michigan, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms Internat., 1983, [copy of PhD dissertation, Washington, D.C., Georgetown University], p. 161n.

12 Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, Baron Redesdale, *Memories*, 11 vols. London, Hutchinson, 1915, vol. II, p. 563.

13 Richard Burton with Charles Tyrwhit-Drake, *Unexplored Syria: Visits to the Libanus, the Tulul al-Safa, the Anti-Libanus, the Northern Libanus and the 'Alah*, 11 vols., London, Tinsley Brothers, 1872.

14 Isabel Burton, *The Inner Life of Syria, Palestine and the Holy Land: From my private journal*, 11 vols., London, H.S. King & Co., 1875.

15 Redesdale, *Memories*, vol. II, pp. 572–573.

worthy that during Burton's sojourn in Damascus, which is well documented (not least by himself), there is no evidence at all of any interest on his part in Arabic manuscripts or Arabic literature.

Burton, angry after his dismissal, wrote *The Jew, the Gypsy and El Islam* only part of which was published posthumously in 1898. A further text, which was never published, was entitled *Human Sacrifice Amongst Eastern Jews: or, The Murder of Padre Tomaso*. In this Burton accused Sephardic Jews in Damascus of the ritual murder of the Capuchin Friar Padre Tomaso and his servant in 1840. (The friar's blood was allegedly needed for the baking of some unleavened bread for the forthcoming Passover festival.) This scurrilous work of Burton's did not even have the merit of being original, as it was in large part plagiarised from an earlier French book.<sup>16</sup>

Burton falsely claimed that Rashid Pasha, the governor of Syria, was recalled to Constantinople in disgrace soon after Burton left Damascus. This was not true. Rashid Pasha, who had gained a reputation for sternness and efficiency, was appointed to govern another province before being promoted to Foreign Minister.<sup>17</sup> It was Burton who left Syria under a cloud.

Plainly Burton was a loose cannon and his next posting was to Trieste in 1873 where he remained until his death in 1890. There it was judged by the Foreign Office that he could do no harm, as there were no turbulent tribesmen in the port's hinterland. It was in Trieste that it seems that he really did start work on his translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Although Bram Stoker (1847–1912), the author of *Dracula* and a close friend of Burton's, claimed that Burton was working on his translation as early as 1879,<sup>18</sup> and Burton suggests the same in his "Translator's Foreword", the real trigger for beginning the translation was clearly the publication in a subscriber's edition of John Payne's 1882–1884 translation of the MacNaghten, or Calcutta 11 printed version of the *Nights*.

By now Burton was in poor health. But he began serious work on the translation on April 1st 1884, having asked to borrow Payne's copy of the MacNaghten edition, also known as Calcutta 11. (Previously Burton had had only the Breslau text to hand.) It is ironic that Burton chose the MacNaghten edition as the main source to work from, since Burton, who had known this officer in

16 Andrew Vincent, "The Jew, the Gypsy and El-Islam: An examination of Richard Burton's consulship in Damascus and his premature recall, 1868–1871", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 117 (1985) 2, pp. 155–173; Geoffrey Alderman and Colin Holmes, "The Burton Book", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series*, 18 (2008), pp. 1–13.

17 Gross, *Ottoman Rule*, pp. 115–166.

18 Mary S. Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*, London, Little Brown, 1998, p. 644.

India, absolutely loathed him. However it is difficult to make a definitive assessment of the accuracy of Burton's translation, because it is uncertain at any one point what exactly he was translating. Though he used Calcutta 11 as his base text, he supplemented this with Bulaq and Breslau texts, as well as the Wortley-Montagu manuscript, and an odd (forged) manuscript that Hermann Zotenberg (1836–1909) had discovered in the Bibliothèque nationale. The exact degree of dependence of Burton's translation on that of Payne has occasioned decades of controversy. I think the conclusive verdict was delivered by the book collector and bibliographer Quentin Keynes, (as relayed in Fawn M. Brodie's biography of Burton): "Mr Quentin Keynes recently came into possession of a good many pages from the same Villon Society Edition (1882–1884) of Payne's *Tales from the Arabic* that Burton had consulted in translating some of the tales for his *Supplemental Nights*. These heavily marked pages make clear that Burton did indeed use Payne's version but that he checked it with the Arabic texts and made changes in the prose whenever he felt Payne to be inexact, which was often, particularly when he felt Payne to be blurring the essential vulgarity of the original".<sup>19</sup> Payne, on the other hand, while he remained friendly, thought Burton had overdone the vulgarity and the obscenity of the original.

In order to demonstrate the superiority of Burton's translation over Payne's and its independence from it, the biographer Fawn M. Brodie compared a paragraph's worth from the first page of the two versions concerning Shahzaman's unexpected return to the palace. At the end of which she described the Burton version as "more earthy, more dramatic".<sup>20</sup> What she did not do was compare Burton's version with the original Arabic, as given in the Calcutta 11 edition. Which is what I shall do:

But when the night was half spent he bethought him that he had forgotten in his palace somewhat which he should have brought with him, so he returned privily [\* privily is Burton's addition] and entered his apartments, where he found the Queen [\*Queen is an addition. It is just *zawja* in the Arabic], his wife, asleep in his own carpet bed [\*his own carpet is an addition], embracing with both arms [\*embracing with both arms is an addition] a black cook [\*cook is Burton's invention, the original has *'abd aswad*, black slave] of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime [\*of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime is Burton's addition]. When he saw this the world waxed black before his sight and he said, 'If such a case happens while

19 Keynes, cited in Fawn M. Brodie, *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton*, New York, Norton, 1967, p. 342.

20 Brodie, *The Devil Drives*, pp. 341–342.

I am yet within sight of the city what will be the doings of this damned whore [\*where Burton has whore, the text has woman] during my long absence at my brother's court? So he drew his cymitar [Arabic *sayf*, or sword. Note Burton's archaic spelling] and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, [\*the two into four pieces with a single blow is Burton again] left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened. [\*without letting anyone know of what had happened is Burton].<sup>21</sup>

Payne, for what it is worth, was much closer to the Arabic original and had only added "without telling anyone what had happened", which Burton presumably borrowed from him. The archaicism of both versions is striking. Also at the end of the first night and every night thereafter Burton mistranslated *adraka*, which, in the context of his mistranslation, meant not that Sheherazade "perceived" the dawn (apart from anything else the gender of the verb would be incorrect), but that dawn "overtook" Sheherazade.

But Burton translated seventy-eight more stories than Payne. And the two men's translations of poetry are strikingly different. And Burton was first on with "Aladdin" and "Zayn al-Asnam" and there Payne's translation is strikingly similar to Burton's. But here it should be born in mind that translating "Aladdin" was not so very difficult, as it has since been demonstrated that the version of "Aladdin" in question was actually an Arabic translation of Galland's French.<sup>22</sup> Burton also admired Weil's translation and it is most likely that he consulted this on occasion. Weil's translation 1838–1841 (2nd heavily revised edition in 1865) was based on Habicht's fraudulent Breslau edition and the first Bulaq edition. It is also the case that he had fewer predecessors in the relatively uncharted territory of the *Nights* apocrypha.

His translation was published in the 1880s in ten plus six supplemental volumes (later reprinted as seven supplemental volumes). Like Lane's version, Burton's translation was clogged with annotation, but whereas Lane had confined himself mostly to notes that shed light on day-to-day life in contemporary Cairo, Burton ranged more widely and took especial care to annotate anything to do with sex, especially homosexual sex. Burton, the Indianist with a smattering of Persian, with some justice, thought that Lane had exaggerated the

21 *The Alif Laila or Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, Commonly Known as 'the Arabian Nights' Entertainments'; Now, for the First Time, Published Complete in the Original Arabic*, IV vols., ed. W.H. Macnaghten, Calcutta, W. Thacker, and London, Wm. H. Allen, 1839–1842, vol. I, p. 2.

22 Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, Harmondsworth, Allen Lane, 1994, p. 57; *Idem*, "Sabbagh, Michel", in *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, II vols., ed. Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, Santa Barbara, Cal., ABC-CLIO, 2004, vol. II, pp. 695–696.

Arabness and the Egyptianness of the *Nights*. He saw the *Nights* as opening a window on the Orient in general and in his annotation he drew heavily on his Indian experiences.

Lane's English had been ponderous and sub-Biblical. Burton's was much worse. Jorge Luis Borges unreasoningly praised Burton for having avoided the stylistic poverty of the Arabic original (but what did Borges know of the Arabic original?) and as having written in a style that was less antiquated than Mardrus's version some twenty years later.<sup>23</sup> This judgement should not be allowed to stand. Of all the translations of the *Nights*, Burton's is the most archaic in its sentence construction and in its revival of defunct items of medieval and renaissance vocabulary. Today the fashion in translation is for fluency and transparency. The ideal translator should be invisible, but Burton made himself visible and noisy on every page. Archaicisms apart, Burton was also conscious that he was not translating an elite text and therefore he sought to render and often exaggerate the vulgarisms that he had found in his source. He was capable of writing normal Victorian English, as in his account of his pilgrimage to Mecca, but in his translation of the *Nights* he seems to have been successfully aiming for an alienation effect.

Burton's translation of the *Nights* followed on immediately after his translation from the Portuguese of the *Lusiads* by Camões. William C. Atkinson, the translator of the more recent Penguin Classics edition of the *Lusiads* had this to say about Burton's translation: "His object was to provide such a poem as Camoens might have written had he been born an Englishman, although the attempt to write Elizabethan English in the nineteenth century overlooked the detail that no readers of that age had survived. Nor was this all, for in a vain attempt to convey further the impression of sixteenth-century Portuguese he clogged his style with hyperbaton, syncope, apocope, aphaeresis, diatesis, paralogogue".<sup>24</sup>

An American critic at the time remarked that though Burton was the master of a great many languages and dialects, English was not among them.<sup>25</sup> It may be that it was Francis Newman's translation of the *Iliad*, which was published in 1856, that had inspired Burton's penchant for the archaic. Newman had aimed

23 Jorge Luis Borges, "Translators of the *Thousand and One Nights*", in Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, New York, Viking, 1999, pp. 96–101.

24 William C. Atkinson, "Introduction", in Luís Vaz de Camões, *The Lusiads*, tr. Atkinson, London, Penguin Books, 1952, pp. 31–32.

25 *New York Daily Tribune*, 22nd February 1881, quoted in Jean-François Gournay, *L'appel du proche-orient: Richard Francis Burton et son temps, 1821–1890*, Paris, Didier-Erudition, 1983, p. 473.

at ‘foreignizing’ Homer in order to give a sense of the epic’s historical remoteness. To that end he resorted to syntactic inversions, as well as the use of a wide range of archaic words drawn from centuries of English and Scottish literature: “behight”, “bragly”, “bulkin”, “choler”, “emprise”, “fain”, “gramsome”, “hie”, “life”, “noisome”, “ravin”, “sith”, “whilom”, “wight”, “wend”. “Sith” and “whilom” seem to be amongst Burton’s favourite words. Would Burton have known of Newman and his translation? For sure. Francis William Newman (1805–1897), besides being a missionary and a classical scholar, had travelled in the Middle East, dressed as an Arab, learnt Arabic and published *Personal Narrative in Letters, Principally from Turkey in the years 1830–3* (1856). In 1871 he published a *Dictionary of Modern Arabic* in two volumes. Burton would certainly have wished to use this, as Lane’s *Arabic-English Lexicon* was of classical Arabic only and moreover it was unfinished. Newman was an idiosyncratic classicist who had translated *Hiawatha* and *Robinson Crusoe* into Latin. He had aimed his translation of the *Iliad* at a much wider public than the scholarly one, as he disliked the idea that translations should be produced only by and for a privileged academic elite. Matthew Arnold’s attack on Newman’s translation was to make it famous or notorious.<sup>26</sup> It seems most likely that Newman’s translation served as Burton’s model, just as it served for William Morris’s translation of the *Odyssey*, which like Burton’s *Nights*, was published in the 1880s (1887–1888).<sup>27</sup>

A translation of such a large and difficult text as the *Nights* was almost of necessity a collaborative effort. Both Lane and Burton may have been reluctant to acknowledge quite how much assistance they received. Lane seems to have downplayed the assistance he received from Muhammad Ayyad al-Tantawi. Burton probably received assistance from such scholars as Hermann Zotenberg, Yaqub Artin Pasha, Francis Joseph Steingass, the Reverend George Percy Badger, James F. Blumhardt, E.J.W. Gibb, Octave Houdas, Archibald Sayce and William Clouston. But, given Burton’s reticence on this subject, it is impossible to determine how much help.

Burton’s translation was widely and mostly well reviewed. The notorious exception was *The Edinburgh Review*, whose editor from 1855 until his death was Henry Reeve (1813–1895). Reeve had requested advance review copies from Burton, but Burton, scenting trouble, had refused. Nevertheless, when only five of Burton’s volumes had appeared, *The Edinburgh Review* published a magis-

26 Timothy C.F. Stunt, “Newman, Francis William”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, LXI vols., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, vol. XL, pp. 633–636; Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A history of translation*, London and New York, Routledge, 1995, pp. 18–140.

27 Venuti, *Translator’s Invisibility*, p. 141.

terial and in many respects impressive survey of the state of *Nights* scholarship, culminating in a lengthy denunciation of Burton's translation.<sup>28</sup> This was very much a matter of Scotsmen and kinsmen looking after their own Edward William Lane, as the article was almost certainly by Lane's great-nephew Stanley Lane-Poole, or just possibly Stanley's brother, Reginald Lane-Poole. Burton had long delighted in feuding with Scotsmen and, apart from Lane and the Lane-Pooles, Andrew Lang had been another of his targets. In the final volume of the Supplemental Nights he replied to the criticisms of the *Edinburgh Review* and drew attention to Reeve's connections with the "Edinburgh clique".

As Borges observed of translators of the *Nights*: "We must understand this hostile dynasty. Lane translated against Galland; Burton against Lane".<sup>29</sup> Just as Lane belittled Galland, so Burton belittled Lane, in the "Translator's Foreword", in the notes and in the "Terminal Essay".<sup>30</sup> So the Lane-Pooles were out for revenge. Whichever Lane-Poole it was claimed that, though Burton said that he was translating the Calcutta II version, he was usually translating the earlier and shorter Bulaq text, but also had recourse to Calcutta I and to Breslau. There was also a short list of Burton's errors in translation: "Captain Burton's version is sometimes rather loose; for example he renders *siyar* which means 'doings' by 'works and words'; *kāna* signifies 'was', but Captain Burton puts 'he made him'. In his anxiety to call a spade something decidedly worse he translates *mal'ouma* ('accursed') by 'damned whore'. Where the Arabic has *ras* ('head') he puts 'eyes'."<sup>31</sup> It is hard to assess the validity of the proposed corrections as much must depend on context and Lane-Poole did not provide page references for his criticisms, but even so they seem captious and trivial.

Burton replied to the *Edinburgh Review* in the final Supplementary volume of his translation.<sup>32</sup> He had no difficulty in dealing with the criticisms of his errors in Arabic and he repeatedly cited a French friend in his defence and this was almost certainly Zotenberg. (Zotenberg was librarian at the Bibliothèque nationale and was the first scholar to make a serious study of manuscripts of the *Nights*.)

Setting the affray with the Lane-Poole gang apart, if Burton's translation made very little impact on the world of academic Arabists, that was because the world of academic Arabists was very small indeed and its members did not interest themselves in popular Arabic literature. Robert Gandell, the Laudian

28 Anonymous, *Edinburgh Review*, no. 355, July, 1886, pp. 166–199.

29 Borges, "Translators", p. 92.

30 See especially Burton, *Nights* vol. I, p. xii, xc and *Supplemental Nights*, vol. VII, pp. 424–430.

31 Anonymous, *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 180–181.

32 Burton, *Supplementary Nights*, vol. VII, pp. 417–444.

Professor of Arabic (1861–1887) was primarily a Hebraist and published nothing on Arabic. In Cambridge William Wright (1830–1889), the Thomas Adams Professor from 1870 until 1889, and his successor William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), Thomas Adams Professor from 1889 until 1894, were much more impressive figures, but neither was at all interested in Arabic fiction. Wright had denounced Payne's translation even before it was published.<sup>33</sup> He does not seem to have paid any attention to Burton's translation. The translation was not reviewed in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, a learned journal which apparently did not see popular Oriental fiction as part of its remit. There was also a friend and ally from Burton's Damascus days, Edward Palmer (1840–1882), who, though he achieved the distinction of being appointed to the Lord Almoner's chair of Arabic in Cambridge, found that the post was so poorly funded that he had to take up journalism instead, before being murdered in the Sinai Desert in 1882. Otherwise, if one was looking for Arabists in late nineteenth-century Britain, there were a handful of missionaries and few eccentric autodidacts like the gypsy-loving George Borrow (though, as agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society, he might be regarded as a missionary too). Edward Said's vision of an academic establishment of British Arabists and Islamists toiling away in the nineteenth century to further their country's interests in the Middle East was the sheerest fantasy.

Whatever the merits or demerits of Burton's translation, it is important to bear in mind that it certainly did not have the same cultural impact as the earlier translation of Galland or the later translation by Joseph Charles Mardrus. The first edition of Burton was for subscribers only. Isabel's later expurgated version sold very badly. Further editions in twelve, sixteen or seventeen volumes were bulky and expensive. Instead, Victorian and Edwardian readers made do with the Grub Street translation of Galland's French perfunctorily edited and bowdlerised by hacks such as the Reverend Edward Forster and H.W. Dulken. There were also, of course, the various selections made for children. Andrew Lang's versions of *Nights* tales in his variously coloured *Fairy Tale Books* (1889–1910) probably had a greater impact on English literature than Burton's laborious travails. I would judge that the main contribution of Burton's translation was to the legend of Burton himself.

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33 Godsall, *Tangled Web*, p. 361.

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