

Studies on Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (1815-1905): Manuscripts, Politics and Oriental Studies

Berlin State Library, 19th to 21st February 2015



CALL FOR PAPERS

The Oriental Department of the Berlin State Library in cooperation with the Oriental Institute of the University of Leipzig cordially invite you to participate in a conference celebrating the 200th birthday of the renowned orientalist, diplomat and manuscript-collector Johann Gottfried Wetzstein. A student of the famous Arabist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, Wetzstein himself was to become one of the most distinguished figures in 19th century German oriental studies. Beyond his published scholarship, his networking skills as a Prussian diplomat in Damascus (1849-61) and later on as a private scholar in Berlin brought him in close contact with many of his famous contemporaries. This is documented by his correspondence of which substantial parts are preserved in the Berlin State Library. As an avid collector of Islamic manuscripts his important acquisitions contributed significantly to the holdings of the libraries in Tuebingen, Leipzig, and Berlin. Wetzstein's life and manifold interests can provide a starting point to explore aspects of 19th century scholarship and diplomacy that put his individual achievements within a broader context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- Wetzstein and the history of manuscript collections in Europe;
- Manuscript acquisition in the Middle East in the 19th century;
- Arabic manuscript studies in the 19th century;
- Wetzstein's contribution to Oriental studies;
- Wetzstein and European (Prussian) interests in the Middle East;
- Wetzstein's networks in Damascus;
- Wetzstein's economic ventures in Syria;
- Investigations into the Wetzstein collections in Tuebingen, Leipzig and Berlin

SUBMISSIONS

Interested participants are invited to submit a proposal (email only) with title, brief abstract and short CV by 31 May 2014 to christoph.rauch@sbb.spk-berlin.de.

It is intended to cover travelling expenses of successful applicants, depending on available funding.

Successful applicants will be notified by the end of June 2014.

Boris Liebrecht (University of Leipzig, Oriental Institute)

Christoph Rauch (Berlin State Library, Head of Oriental Department)