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

Berlin State Library, 19 to 21 February 2015

Venue: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Simón-Bolívar-Hall), Potsdamer Str. 33, 10785 Berlin

The Symposium is made possible through the generous support of:

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
Freunde der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin e.V.

Opening – Thursday 19 February 2015, 18:00

Greetings:
Barbara Schneider-Kempf, Verena Klemm

Introduction:
Boris Liebrenz, Christoph Rauch

Keynote lecture:
François Déroche (Paris)
The Qur’anic collections acquired by Wetzstein

Music and Recitation:
Claudia Ott (Nay, recitation and introduction)
Accompanied by Hadi Alizadeh (Daff and Tonbak) and Farhan Sabbagh (Oud)

Small Reception

Exhibition of some original documents related to Wetzstein
First Conference Day – Friday, 20 February 2015

9:15 Registration and coffee

Session 1: Scholarship and diplomacy  
Chair: Verena Klemm (Leipzig)

10:00 Ingeborg Huhn (Berlin)  
Some remarks concerning the official correspondence of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein

10:30 Ludmila Hanisch (Berlin)  
Semitic studies at the University of Berlin during Wetzstein’s lifetime

11:00 Christoph Rauch (Berlin)  
Slow and steady wins the race – The 19th century cataloguing projects of Islamic manuscripts at the Royal Library in Berlin

11:30 Discussion

11:45 Lunch break

Session 2: Damascus  
Chair: Julia Gonnella (Berlin)

13:15 Anke Scharrahs (Dresden)  
Living in mid-19th century Damascus – insights into lifestyle of foreigners and locals in Damascus’ Old City

13:45 Boris Liebrenz (Leipzig)  
Wetzstein as a broker of Arabic prints in Syria

14:15 Ibrahim Akel (Paris)  
Wetzstein in Arabic sources and remarks on some manuscripts from his collections

14:45 Discussion

15:00 Coffee break

Session 3: Manuscript Collections  
Chair: Yasmin Faghihi (Cambridge)

15:30 Helga Rebhan (München)  
Collecting Islamic manuscripts at the Munich Court Library in the 19th century

16:00 Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf (Bonn)  
The Wetzstein collection at Tuebingen University Library – its history, its content and its reception in Oriental studies

16:30 Kaoukab Chebaro / Samar El Mikati El Kaissi (Beirut)  
Manuscript ownership and readership at the American University of Beirut at the turn of the 20th century

17:00 Discussion
Second Conference Day – Saturday, 21 February 2015

Session 4: Investigations into the collection
Chair: Ronny Vollandt (Berlin)

9:30 Florian Schwarz (Wien)
*Between Medina and Damascus - Early modern landscapes of scholarship in the light of some codices in the Wetzstein (II) collection*

10:00 Pavel Teptyuk (St. Petersburg)
*The Maqāmāt by Muhammad al-Qawwās (Manuscripts at Berlin, St.Petersburg and Cambridge collections)*

10:30 Walid Saleh (Toronto)
*The fantastic literature in medieval Islam: Wetzstein II 1173 Kitāb al-ʿazamah as an example*

11:00 Discussion

11:15 Coffee break

Session 5: Wetzstein and the Coran
Chair: Claus-Peter Haase (Berlin)

11:45 Hars Kurio (Raisdorf/Berlin)
*On Wetzstein’s draft of a translation of the Coran*

12:15 Michael Marx (Berlin)
*Codex Wetzstein II 1913 and the textual history of the Coran*

12:45 Alba Fedeli (Birmingham)
*Tischendorf and the Mingana Collection: Manuscript acquisition and Quranic studies*

13:15 Discussion

13:30 Lunch Break

Session 6: Wetzstein and Prose Epics
Chair: Boris Liebrenz (Leipzig)

15:00 Claudia Ott (Göttingen)
*Wetzstein and the manuscripts of Arabian epics*

15:30 Jan Just Witkam (Leiden)
*Wetzstein's manuscripts with popular stories*

16:00 Coffee break

16:30 Faustina Doufikar-Aerts (Amsterdam)
*The Consul and the King: Wetzstein and Alexander*

17:00 Robert Irwin (London)
*The Arabist and consul in Damascus Sir Richard Burton and the problematic nature of his translation of The Thousand and One Nights*

17:30 Discussion and conference summary

Excursion: Sunday 22 February 11:00-12:30
Guided historical tour on the cemetery “Sophienfriedhof” (meeting point main entrance, Bergstr. 29, 10115 Berlin, tour in German)
As the organizers of the symposium, we support the initiative for an urgent restoration of the tomb of Wetzstein’s family. We would appreciate your donation. About 20,000 € will be needed. More information will be available at the symposium.

Spendenkonto Stiftung Historische Kirchhöfe und Friedhöfe in Berlin-Brandenburg:
KVA Mitte-Nord / Stiftung Kirchhöfe
Berliner Bank
BIC: DEUT DE DB 110
IBAN: DE91 1007 0848 0512 7006 01
Verwendungszweck: Wetzstein