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Projects in manuscript studies

In this issue:

Books tell their story: cataloguing secondary notes in Islamic manuscripts in Gotha

The Byzantine translation of the Qur'ān from the eighth/ninth century CE and its role in the polemic of Nicetas of Byzantium

Books tell their story: cataloguing secondary notes in Islamic manuscripts in Gotha

Within the framework of the research group WRoTe: "Wissensrohstoff Text" funded by the European Social Fund for Germany (<http://www.esf.de/>) at Leipzig University (<http://wirote.informatik.uni-leipzig.de/wrote/index.php>) a new project has been called to life which aims to broaden our knowledge about the book culture of the Middle East. Manuscript books from many parts of that region can be eloquent witnesses to their history and the people using them. Some are littered with notes documenting their purchase, public and private reading, inheritance, endowment, lending or pawning, to name but the most common among them.

The data contained in these notes (names of persons and places, dates or prices) offers plentiful research opportunities for social and cultural history. Who read what, where, at what age, or how much did readers pay for their books? Between high-end bibliophilia and the readings of only superficially educated people, a multifaceted portrait of the reading audience unmatched by other sources emerges.

While the value of these notes has been highlighted repeatedly, systematic studies were impeded by a scarcity of available resources since manuscript

catalogues as well as text editions usually give only very limited information on the paratextual material contained in a book or disregard it entirely.

Collecting these notes in a systematic fashion is, therefore, an essential tool for any serious study of book culture. This project will collect and present the notes of some 3,000 manuscripts preserved at Forschungsbibliothek Burg Friedenstein in Gotha, written mostly in Arabic and partly in Turkish or Persian. In their vast majority these books were acquired by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) in the first decade of the nineteenth century during his stay in Aleppo and Cairo, comparatively few were bought in Constantinople, Damascus, and Jerusalem.

The project builds upon an existing database structure successfully implemented for two previous cataloguing projects: the first documenting the secondary entries of the Refaiya family-library, originally from Damascus and now preserved in Leipzig University Library (<http://www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de/content/main/search-secentry.xml>), the second those found in the Oriental manuscripts of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin (<http://orient-digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/content/main/search-secentry.xml>). All the notes are given in full text and enriched



Fig. 1 a and b. Manuscript Leipzig Vollers 116, f. 2r: Title page of the manuscript with secondary notes. Ownership statement by the historian Ibn Ayyub.

Start Forschung Team Dokumentation Kontakt Links

Vollers 0116 / 2r / 2

English عربي

Beschreibung eines Sekundäreintrages

Signatur Vollers 0116 / 2r / 2

Link zur Handschrift RefaiyaBook_islamhs_00000021

Link zur Abbildung Vollers 0116 / 2r

Art des Eintrags Lesereintrag

Personendaten

↳ Name : Šaraf ad-Dīn [Mūsā] b. Ġamāl ad-Dīn [Yūsuf] Ibn Aiyūb al-Anṣārī aš-Šāfiʿī

↳ Todesdatum : nach 1000/1592

↳ Eigenschaft : Leser

↳ Anmerkungen

Besitzer von Berlin Ms.or.oct. 1455.
 Leser von Leipzig Vollers 116, 593 (datiert 988); Berlin We II 298 (981), 326.
 Kopist von Damaskus Maktabat al-Asad 15370(datiert 978), vgl. Martel-Thoumian: Catalogue, S. 76.
 Gazzī: Kawākib III, S. 194, Nr. 1539. Güneş (Hg.): Das Kitāb ar-raud al-ʿaṭīr, S. 2-6. Berger: Gesellschaft und Individuum, S. 26-29.

Text original

الحمد لله رب العالمين
 نظر فيه داعيا [لمالكه] بالرعية
 شرف الدين بن جمال الدين
 بن ايوب الانصاري
 الشافعي سنة
 رحمه [.....]

Sprache Arabisch

Skript Arabisch

Handschriften
 Sekundäreinträge
 ↳ Suchmasken
 ↳ Gesamtindex SE
 ↳ Filter

Einbände
 Historische Dokumente
 Hilfe zur Suche

Nutzerkennung: keine
 MyIHS 2.8
 based on MyCoRe 2014.02

Die Ausstellung zur Refaiya-Bibliothek
 19. April - 25. August 2013

18 April 14, 2013
 Refaiya 1835
 Eine Ausstellung von Darmstadt nach Leipzig

Fig. 2. Description of the ownership statement as it appears in the Leipzig Refaiya database, the model for the envisaged database of manuscript notes in Gotha.

with metadata so that all the persons, places and institutions are identified wherever possible. The findings are cross-referenced with additional material collected personally in Beirut, Halle, and Tübingen, or online via digitization projects (mostly Dublin, Harvard, Michigan, Paris), and additional data occasionally found in manuscript catalogues or text editions.

The aim of the project is to contribute a great number of new entries to the growing dataset of the two previous projects in Leipzig and Berlin while also continuing the development of the existing database structure. The latter will ensure more user-friendliness and enhanced search options. At the core of this development lies the creation of an independent database of persons. Any information permanently connected with a person and not liable to change in different entries (name, dates, manuscripts possessed or read etc., sources and literature) will be stored centrally and the personal dataset linked to all the relevant manuscript entries. Since up until now this information had to be entered repetitively for every single note, every new bit

of information found inevitably triggered a manual change in all the entries mentioning the person in question, a time-consuming procedure with the potential for confusion and mistakes. Henceforth personal data can be amended or corrected centrally which will allow a better handling of the database while the separate personal files will also enhance its usefulness as a unique prosopographical tool.

This third application of the database will give researchers free access to more than 2,200 additional secondary entries documenting the individual history and use of a large number of manuscripts from the Middle East from the tenth to the nineteenth century as well as making it possible to reconstruct libraries long lost and scattered around the world. This application will be a basis for further investigations into the history of books and book culture of the Middle East.

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