Johann Gottfried Wetzstein. Orientalist und preußischer Konsul im osmanischen Syrien (1849–1861). By Ingeborg Huhn. Islamkundliche Untersuchungen. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2016. 396 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. Indexes. €54.00, paper.
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You are a young orientalist, hired by the University of Berlin as a *Privatdozent* (unsalaried, but paid by each student who takes your course) when the revolution of 1848 empties the benches in your lecture hall. What do you do? You apply, of course, to run the newly-established Prussian consulate in Damascus. Although you have none of the conventional training for such work, you do command Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, Aramaic, Persian, Greek, English, French, and Latin. The consular position is also unsalaried, but Syria is your "spiritual home" (10). Thus reasoned Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, whose twelve-year career in Damascus Ingeborg Huhn examines in this absorbing study.

If the appointment of an amateur seems offhand, procedures at the consulate were positively casual. At one point, three years passed without Wetzstein's submitting a report. The scholar often disappeared on long expeditions throughout the Levant: learning new dialects, making friends with villagers and chieftains, collecting medieval Arabic manuscripts whose sale to libraries and Berlin's royal court was, along with his submissions to journals, his only source of income. He took extended furloughs home, first for eight months (an absence it did not occur to him to report), later for much longer. Who would mind the store in his absence? Sometimes a native employee; usually the British consul.

Commerce, not power politics, was Berlin's goal, and Damascus, where the great caravan routes of Near and Far East began and ended, was the Ottomans' third largest *entrepôt* (after Constantinople and Cairo). Wetzstein's mission was to develop a trading presence there. The consul did his diligent best, and economic historians will benefit from the data he gathered, reproduced in appendices. When it became clear that transport costs would eat up any German profits, however, Wetzstein confessed his mission a failure. So too was his disastrous attempt to make ends meet by buying land to raise silkworms, a venture that came to a crashing end when 70,000 Bedouins and their half-million camels descended on his and other villages, felling his 24,000 mulberry trees and eating everything in sight.

With many friendships made during his journeys "in country," Wetzstein's good offices were much in demand. Oblivious or perhaps ignorant of the first law of diplomacy—never involve oneself in the domestic affairs of the host country—he mediated between Muslims and Christians, Christians and Jews, Greek Catholics and Orthodox, Bedouins, and Druze—and during uprisings, between the tribes and their government. In spring 1860, on expedition in Jordan, reports reached him of massacres of Christians in Lebanon. Back in Damascus, he expected the worst. With a "bloodbath announced" (150) for the morrow, Wetzstein locked up the consulate's archive, entrusting it to a Muslim friend, and set off on another research trip. Three days later he was back, however, after which the massacres began.

Prussia's palatial mansion sheltered two hundred fleeing Christians, fed at Wetzstein's personal expense, while Muslim neighbors supplied armed troops to protect the refugees. Wetzstein's notes show they were not alone in helping. Although usually he had nothing good to say about Ottoman officials, Wetzstein praised Mustafa Bey Ḥawāṣilī for saving roughly a thousand Christians on the first night (and was lynched himself in August). Abd al-Qādir al-Ǧazā'irī, the Algerian resistance leader, living in Damascus since 1855 on a French pension, took in 10–15,000. When his own courtyard was full, he armed "some hundred of his Maghrebis" (165–66) to

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take others to the Citadel, a rescue operation famed, Wetzstein marveled, as far as the Caucasus, where he was lauded by a fellow freedom fighter, the Imam Shamil. Indeed, "hundreds of Muslim families had also taken in the fugitives." Thanks to their "big-heartedness" (153) most of the city's 25,000 Christians survived.

Huhn's book is fascinating but frustrating. It is pockmarked with often unexplained and sometimes inconsistently romanized Arabic words and titles; incomplete citations (158n315); unremarked discrepancies; and unasked questions (what was Wetzstein *doing* during those long Berlin furloughs–thirteen months in 1859–60?). Huhn has mastered Wetzstein's voluminous papers and looked at diplomatic documents, but Ottoman officialdom, of which the consul was so critical, is condemned to silence, as are—except for five titles (one completely irrelevant)—all work published since 1989. Thus, Huhn misses the opportunity to bring Wetzstein's observations into conversation with scholarship that rests on a different "archive"—such as Leila Fawaz's *An Occasion for War* (1994) or Caesar Farah's *Politics of Interventionism in Ottoman Lebanon, 1830–1861* (2000). What would the well-meaning consul, so contemptuous of Fuad Pasha, have thought of the Fuad Pasha in Engin Akarlı's *Long Peace* (1993)? Does Wetzstein's account of the generosity of Damascene Muslims put pressure on Ussama Makdisi's *Culture of Sectarianism* (2002) or does it reinforce his argument? Such questions require interpretation, but Wetzstein's author disappears behind her subject, and the reader is the poorer for it.

Margaret Lavinia Anderson
University of California—Berkeley

Tangible Belonging: Negotiating Germanness in Twentieth-Century Hungary. By John C. Swanson. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017. xxi, 456 pp. Notes. Index. Bibliography. Maps. Illustrations. $34.95, paperback.
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Tangible Belonging analyzes the history of rural German-speakers in late nineteenth and twentieth-century Hungary. This population, whose core component is also known as Danube Swabians, played an important role in the southern Hungarian provinces regained from the Ottoman Empire around 1700 and resettled by a broad variety of ethnic groups. Due to their cultural diversity, some of these territories fell to Romania and the newly created Yugoslavia after World War I. The study follows the transformation of Danube Swabian identity within the changing borders of modern Hungary.

Based on his long experience with examining the interplay of German and Hungarian influences in central Europe, which also expressed itself in his 2001 study *The Remnants of the Habsburg Monarchy: The Shaping of Modern Austria and Hungary, 1918–1922*, John C. Swanson is superbly qualified to undertake this research. He uses an impressive array of sources, which include not only local chronicles, church logbooks, museum collections, fictional literature, newspapers, and the plethora of ethnographic research done on these villages in the interwar era, but also perceptive interviews conducted with local informants in both German and Hungarian. Together, these sources deliver a detailed portrayal of Danube Swabian life since the late 1800s.

The study shows the conflicting influences that widened the previously localized horizons of rural German-speakers. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 had given ethnic Hungarian elites virtual control of their half of the Habsburg Monarchy. They considered the Kingdom of Hungary a nation-state and tried to adapt

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