Diez had been cannibalized from albums kept in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, notably a Timurid calligraphic album, now accessioned Bağdat 411. Secondly, in contrast to the first three albums (Diez A fols. 70–73), which were likely created in Istanbul at a time when Diez was residing in the capital of the Ottoman Empire as the Prussian chargé d'affaire (1786–1790), the albums Diez A fols. 73 and 74 were assembled and bound later in Berlin.

The last of the so-called Diez albums accessioned as Diez A fol. 74, which contains mostly only calligraphy, received very little scholarly attention in comparison to the four other volumes until the publication of the seminal essay by David Roxburgh in 1995. If Roxburgh focused primarily on the material and its original provenance in the four first albums (Diez A fols. 70–73), he also provided for the first time a detailed and exhaustive account of what the fifth album, Diez A fol. 74, contained. The thorough codicological investigation further led Roxburgh to two decisive conclusions. First, most of the calligraphic items acquired by Heinrich Friedrich von

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4 Roxburgh, "Diez", p. 113 and p. 122: "[…] when Diez left Istanbul in 1790, he carried a corpus of loose calligraphic materials, loose drawings, and whole album folios which were subsequently assembled into albums in Berlin (mss. Diez A fols. 73–74).” According to recent research, these two albums were mounted in the Prussian Königliche Bibliothek in 1837–1838, twenty years after Diez bequeathed his collection to the institution. I am very indebted to Christoph Rauch for providing me with this information. See his essay in the present volume.
An examination of the organization of the diverse materials compiled in the Diez albums makes evident the intellectual process that lay behind the mounting of these last two volumes. Indeed, with the exception of a calligraphic folio pasted onto a page and a preparatory sketch for an illustration accompanying some text, both in Diez A fol. 73, all the heterogeneous written material that Diez had in his possession was intentionally gathered into one single volume. The album maker(s) probably used a rather crude classification, which established a mere dichotomy. On one hand indeed drawn, painted, sketched or pounced figurative or decorative materials, were all displayed together in the first four albums. The written samples and specimen, as varied as they may be – extracts from profane and religious texts, correspondence, epigraphic designs, illuminations with inscriptions, and even an inscribed drawing (Diez A fol. 74, p. 24) – were, on the other hand, assembled into the last volume. Such an arrangement could be primarily due to the teleological nature of the works contained in the albums and consequently proceeding from a very basic logic reflecting the nature of these works: drawings versus written items. The fact that the person responsible for the creation of the last two albums in Berlin chose to present paintings, drawings, and written material in an obviously separate fashion brings into question how Europeans of the early nineteenth century envisioned, understood, and categorized this non-Western material. In parallel, the conception of the Diez album A fol. 74 calls also into question how Diez and his contemporaries perceived calligraphy in Arabic scripts. In his Denkwürdigkeiten aus Asien, published in 1811, Diez praised the genius of several medieval authors, but he seldom considered the generic visual forms of the manuscripts he collected. Nevertheless, Diez wrote from 1790 on a detailed catalogue of the works he owned entitled Verzeichnis der morgenländischen und abendländischen Handschriften in meiner Bibliothek. The entries provide much more codicological information as well aesthetic considerations regarding script, illumination, and painting. Diez also added at the end of the volume two chapters in which he deals with

5 The calligraphy is located on p. 35 of the album Diez A fol. 73, whereas the sketch was mounted onto p. 70 of the same album.

6 Denkwürdigkeiten aus Asien consists of translations by Diez of various texts composed in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages. Diez did not comment on the physical aspect of the manuscripts he used. The only reference occurs in the description of the goods and properties of Süleyman the Magnificent’s vizier Rüstem Pasha (d. 1561). Under number 19 of the inventory are mentioned 8,000 beautiful and well-copied Qur’ans (schön geschriebene erhabene Kurans). In a note, Diez indicated that what made these manuscripts valuable was the calligraphy, see Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, Denkwürdigkeiten aus Asien in Künsten und Wissenschaften, Sitten, Gebräuchen and Alterthümern, Religion und Regierungsverfassung aus Handschriften und eigenen Erfahrungen gesammelt von Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, Berlin 1811, vol. 1, pp. 96–97, 99–100.

7 Now kept in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin under the accession number Ms. Cat. A 478b, the manuscript is handwritten and autograph. It is entirely digitized and accessible online: http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000B0860000000. Nevertheless, the content has not been yet the subject of a systematic analysis. See also the contribution of Christoph Rauch to this volume.