

## Conference “Mistakes and the study of manuscripts” 2016

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### Readers’ practices with mistakes

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*Contradicting classical stemmatology? The probably oldest copy of the Kitab al-Zina and its many mistakes*

**Abstract** – The Leipzig University Library holds a fragmentary codex which contains the probably oldest (c. early 11th cent.) witness of text from the *Kitab al-Zina*, an etymological encyclopaedia written by the Ismaili Abu Hatim al-Razi (died c. 933). The original scribe has been corrected over time by at least three different hands. Aside from superficial mistakes like a different word order or unclear writing, surprisingly often the original text seems to have been plainly wrong and nonsensical. In contrast, a 19th cent. copy provides us with a far better text, thus contradicting the assumption of classical stemmatology that mistakes increased over time. Several examples of scribal (or other?) mistakes from the Leipzig manuscript will be presented and interpreted, along with their corrections which are sometimes no less puzzling.