

Court librarian Sebastian Tegnagel, his network and the Oriental manuscripts circulating in learned Europe during the early 17th century

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Sebastian Tegnagel was the court librarian of the Imperial library in Vienna from 1608 until his death in 1636. At the same time, he was an active member of the Republic of Letters, notably the Republic of Arabic Letters, the circle of European scholars devoted to acquiring and disseminating knowledge of the Orient in the early modern age. The Austrian National Library (ÖNB) holds two groups of texts that can help us understand the complexity of his intellectual endeavours. These are: the extraordinary collection of Oriental manuscripts built up by Tegnagel; and the corpus of manuscript letters describing his work as an Orientalist and as a librarian. The two sources need to be studied together, because each sheds light on the other and only by interlinking them we can attempt to answer the crucial question that we raised at the beginning of our research: how and why, in early 17th century Vienna, did one become an Orientalist? Large parts of Tegnagel's correspondence are dedicated to the enrichment of the collection of manuscripts. Much of the surviving material written by Tegnagel documents his work with manuscripts in Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, and Hebrew.

With this contribution we aim to present the objectives of the interdisciplinary project "The Oriental Outpost of the Republic of Letters. Sebastian Tegnagel (d. 1636), the Imperial Library in Vienna, and Knowledge of the Orient." (FWF P-30511). The first part of the paper will concentrate on Tegnagel's correspondence and his network as traced from this correspondence. The second part will focus on Oriental manuscripts he discussed in his letters. To illustrate Tegnagel's scholarly practices in the field of Oriental studies we will focus on several Oriental manuscripts which he read and commented on.

"Was wäre eine Bibliothek ohne Bibliothekare?"

Die Wiener Hofbibliothek im Spannungsfeld von Macht und Öffentlichkeit

Internationales Symposium 19.–20. November 2018

Balassi Institut, Collegium Hungaricum Wien