Creating the Digital Republic of Letters, Rome:
Early modern "Orientalism"

The divide between digital and non-digital scholarship in the humanities is narrowing down remarkably nowadays. A critical mass of scholars have acquired at least basic skills in computing techniques, while programmers and software developers have familiarized themselves with the messy nature of historical data. The need for methodological integration is the order of the day, and a concise historical topic within a relatively consolidated scholarly community is the right setting to start such a discussion, which always raises issues of consortium and infrastructure building.

In that spirit, we invite friends and colleagues to join an event that is halfway between a workshop and a (low-threshold) hackathon, between a book launch and a structured strategic discussion. Two elements are at the center: the experience of COST Action IS1310 "Reassembling the Republic of Letters" (2014–18) (http://www.republicofletters.net/), recently consolidated into a book we will launch (https://www.univerlag.uni-goettingen.de/handle/3/isbn-978-3-86395-403-1); and the considerations arising from a Vienna-based project on early modern "orientalist" scholarship that we would like to put into a broader research perspective.

We are envisioning a three-part structure. In a first afternoon session, we will invite to the table fellow projects dealing with the broader context of "orientalism" or erudition around 1600, in Rome and elsewhere. Brief project presentations (c. 10 min) will help contextualize the research currently being carried out by our research group on the Vienna court librarian Sebastian Tengnagel († 1636): We look into his collection of oriental manuscripts and the gathering of knowledge about the Orient in early 17th-century Central Europe (https://geschichtsforschung.univie.ac.at/forschung/oorpl/).

In a second afternoon session, taking the outlined material as a basis, we will focus on some questions in common to all of our projects: Can we notice patterns in the development of trans-confessional and inter-religious communication throughout the early modern period? If so, what are the spatial and temporal parameters? We will then try to address these questions through digital methods. This part, informed by comparative case studies, should open the floor for a broader debate about the benefits (or not) of digital scholarship.

In the early evening, we will present the book resulting from the above mentioned COST Action as an example of what sustained dialogue between programmers, scholars and librarians might look like.

A reception will follow the workshop, so that the discussion might continue over drinks and light snacks.

Venue: Austrian Historical Institute Rome, Viale Bruno Buozzi 111, 00197 – Roma (http://www.oehirom.it/de/)

Date: 30 October 2019

Languages: English, Italian

Schedule:

	From 14.00	Welcome Tea & Coffee
	14.30	Welcome Address (Andreas Gottsmann)
	14.40-16.30	**Session 1**: A Republic of Oriental Letters?
	16.30-17.00	Tea & Coffee
	17.00-18.30	**Session 2**: Digital Humanities in the History of Scholarship
	18.30-19.00	Session 3: **Book Launch** "Reassembling the Republic of Letters in the Digital Age. Standards, Systems, Scholarship", H. Hotson, T. Wallnig eds, Göttingen University Press, 2019 (Thomas Wallnig)
	19.00	Reception

Organizers: "The Oriental Outpost of the Republic of Letters" Research Group (OORPL): Thomas Wallnig, Paola Molino, Hülya Celik, Chiara Petrolini, Claudia Römer; Istituto Storico Asutriaco a Roma

Audience: Early modern scholars (history, literature & languages, religion), interested in the application of digital methods in the humanities.

Contact: chiara.petrolini@univie.ac.at, thomas.wallnig@univie.ac.at