

KEYNOTE LECTURE BY MAXIM ROMANOV

PROSPECTS OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

MONDAY 06.09.2021 | 5:30-7:30 PM (CEST) HAMBURG TIME

<https://uni-hamburg.zoom.us/j/69072571565>

Abstract:

Digital humanities has become a prominent part of academic life in the course of the past two decades. Nonetheless, even digital humanists do not agree among themselves when it comes to defining this new academic domain. The lecture will offer a vision of digital humanities that aims at adapting Middle Eastern studies to the digital realities of the rapidly developing world and proposes a novel approach to the study of the Near and Middle East. At the core of this approach lies the idea of “associative trails” formulated by the American scientist and engineer Vannevar Bush (d. 1974) in the middle of the last century. Generated algorithmically, these trails would bring all available information into networks of new knowledge. In their turn, these networks will become both a terra nova of sorts that researchers can travel through for the close reading of historical evidence and new macro objects that researchers would engage with to do the distant reading of historical evidence. The lecture will highlight early examples of such networks generated from modern research publications and premodern Arabic textual sources.

Bio:

Maxim Romanov just joined the University of Hamburg as the junior research group leader (Nachwuchsgruppenleiter) of the project “The Evolution of Islamic Societies (c. 600-1600 CE): Algorithmic Analysis into Social History”, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) within the framework of the Emmy Noether Programme. Maxim has been a Universitätsassistent für Digital Humanities at the Department of History, University of Vienna, and a senior research fellow at the KITAB Project led by Sarah Savant at the Aga Khan University, London (<http://kitab-project.org>). He plays leading roles in several international projects that focus on the digitization of Near and Middle Eastern studies: 1) the development and curation of the digital corpus of Islamicate texts (OpenITI, <https://github.com/OpenITI>); 2) modeling of the Arabic written tradition through a flexible method of tracing text reuse (KITAB Project); development of the geospatial model of the medieval Islamic world (<https://althurayya.github.io/>); optical recognition of the printed and written Arabographic text (OpenITI AOCP).

