WIAG - A dataHub for Medieval and Early Modern Research

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Abstract

Wissens-Aggregator Mittelalter und Frühe Neuzeit (WIAG) –
Structuring, Standardising and Providing Research Data from Medieval and Early Modern
Material and Written Sources

**Proposal for a paper by Bärbel Kröger and Christian Popp, Research Project
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Abstract

In our paper we will give an insight into the new research project WIAG which started in
2020 at the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities. WIAG aims at showing innova-
tive solutions how the expertise of researchers from subject-specific knowledge communities
(which is still often available in analogous form only) can find its way into the worldwide dig-
ital knowledge base. An editorial system which is embedded in a domain-specific knowledge
platform will establish a technical framework for structuring, standardising and providing
research data. Specific research data management will help to handle comprehensive and
heterogeneous collections of research data gained from material and written sources from
the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era. Based on extensive data collections of the re-
search projects Germania Sacra (http://www.germania-sacra.de) and Deutsche Inschriften
des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit (https://adw-goe.de/forschung/forschungsprojekte-
akademienprogramm/deutsche-inschriften/), a reliable domain-specific knowledge hub for
Medieval and Early Modern research will be created. Designed as a collaborative plat-
form, WIAG will also provide for the linkage and integration of data by external researchers
and research projects. A number of established research projects in the field of medieval
and Early Modern research has consented to collaborate with WIAG and to integrate
their data, among them Romana Repertoria online, Deutsches Historisches Institut Rome
(http://www.romana-repertoria.net), Regesta Imperii (http://www.regesta-imperii.de) and
Deutsche Biographie (https://www.deutsche-biographie.de).

WIAG will combine an operational system with a cluster of thesauri. The basic functions
of the operational system will allow researchers and research projects to transform research
results into structured and standardised data. Algorithms and tools provided for this pur-
pose will be based on domain-specific data collections from Germania Sacra and Deutsche
Inschriften. WIAG features data for the identification of entities (e.g. persons, ecclesiastical

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institutions, objects, places) and other classifying data (types of artefacts, functions, religious orders and graphic symbols such as coats of arms, etc.). A large portion of WIAGs data will stem from the research project Germania Sacra. Germania Sacra provides access to the written sources dealing with the church of the Holy Roman Empire. These written sources are the starting point for Germania Sacra's research outcome which traces the history of the church and its institutions from their beginning in the 3rd and 4th centuries until their dissolution in the early 19th century. In addition to print publications the research outcome is published in Germania Sacras Online Portal. With more than 78,000 entries, the Digital Index of Persons offers information on a broad spectrum of ecclesiastical personnel who were of importance for the history of dioceses, monasteries, convents and collegiate churches in medieval and the Early Modern times. Besides the database of clerics an online database of monasteries, convents and collegiate churches of the Holy Roman Empire is an important resource. The structure of these two databases will be one of the starting points for WIAGs ontology: the data model is designed to show persons within their institutional context, the affiliation to religious institutions gives information about the role or position a person held within this institution, the religious orders it belonged to, temporals aspects (like duration of the affiliation), geographical aspects (like location of the institution, belonging to a historical territories). A typology of ecclesiastical offices will be build including historical (latin) forms. Where it is possible WIAGs typology will be assigned to existing classifications and documented with external identifiers from authoritative databases (for example GND). One of the ontologies taken into consideration for WIAG of course is CIDOC-CRM.

WIAG is intended to form a corpus of data of which only a minor proportion is available through important existing authority data providers such as the German National Library (GND) and open-domain knowledge collections such as Wikidata. By using FAIR data standards like unique identifiers and standard interfaces, domain specific data will be made interoperable and internationally connectable. Within the research project WIAG the existing collections of data will be expanded. Especially where until now representation of research data in digital form is incomplete, the project will help to provide reliable scholarly data. For all data of WIAGs authority file references will be included, that give evidence of data provenance. WIAG will combine the advantages of free and collaboratively developed data collections with quality standards of controlled authority files. WIAG will be sustainably serviced within the infrastructure of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

The project is working in close cooperation with existing initiatives who also work on specialized Linked Data environments for medieval and Early Modern history. Among others there are to be mentioned the Project histHub (https://histhub.ch/) of the Swiss Consortium Historicum and the Collaborative Open Research Environment for the Humanities (CORE-H) which also started in 2020 at Jena University (http://mephisto.uni-jena.de/projekte/core-h/). When preparing our paper for the Data for History conference we will especially with the latter one consult with each other so that we can present a common strategy for modelling our data.

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