

CfP: On the Way into the Unknown? Comparative Perspectives on the 'Orient' in (Early) Modern Travelogues

Place: Vienna (Austria)

Host Institution: Austrian Academy of Sciences/Institute for Modern and Contemporary Historical Research

Organization: Arno Strohmeyer/Doris Gruber/project team "Travelogues: Perceptions of the Other 1500–1876—A Computerized Analysis"

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Deadline: 07.01.2019

URL: <http://www.travelogues-project.info/cpf/>

The 'Orient' was a popular travel destination during the (Early) Modern Period. People went there on pilgrimages, diplomatic missions, and to trade, conduct research or educate themselves. Records of these experiences offer an excellent source to scrutinize perceptions of otherness. By analyzing this, one has to face several challenges: what people perceived as 'other' is always an expression of relationships. It varied individually and in connection with the socio-cultural background of each person. There is no binary distinction between 'other' and 'own', but a transition zone with a multiverse of variations. Additionally, most of the travelogues were (co-)dependent upon each other and/or different kinds of media. What was perceived as 'other' created and solidified power relationships as well as stereotypes. Current research has emphasized the mutual influence of perceptions of otherness and transformation processes connected to politics, media and society. Again, a strong influence of the socio-cultural background can be observed. In the German-speaking-world, the conquest of Constantinople (1453) and the failed siege of Vienna (1683) were decisive events, while the conquest of Granada (1492) played an important role in Spain, and the Battle of Mohács (1526) and the Peace of Eisenburg (1664) had a lasting influence in Hungary. From the 18th century onward, the increasingly differentiated and critically considered notion of 'Orientalism' (Edward W. Said) as well as a simultaneously prospering 'Orientmania' seem to be tangible on a more transcultural level.

These source and topic-inherent circumstances make comparative analysis more challenging, reflected, for example, in the fact that previous research on 'otherness' usually focused on individual or a few selected travelogues or similar media (types). Therefore, possibilities and limits of comparative studies will be explored in the course of the workshop. To enhance the discussion, a focus in terms of geography, types of media and time is established. We invite you to discuss perceptions of the 'Orient' (especially the Ottoman and Persian Empires) in travelogues from the 16th to the 19th centuries. To obtain a comprehensive understanding, the travellers will originate in as many as possible different cultures. Among others, non-European perspectives are particularly welcome, especially on travels within the Orient. The papers of the workshop will cover, but are not limited to, the following topics.

Topic 1 Perceptions of Otherness: What was perceived as 'other' in the travelogues on the 'Orient'? How was otherness constructed? Which differences and developments can be shown in a synchronous or diachronic perspective?

Topic 2 Biographics: To what extent did the biographical and socio-cultural background of the persons involved in the production of travelogues and the (presumed) recipients influence the perceptions of otherness contained therein? How can this be proven?

Topic 3 Intermateriality and Intermodality: How did the travelogues relate to other reports and media, especially concerning the texts and pictures. How can this be traced?

Topic 4 Possibilities of comparative analysis: Is it possible to translate the otherness constructed in travelogues into comparable categories? What are the challenges, and which (new) possibilities do digital analysis methods offer?

Topic 5 Impact: How can we track the contemporary reception and subsequent significance of (individual) travel reports, aside from the number of their editions and translations?

The workshop takes place within the framework the FWF/DFG project "Travelogues: Perceptions of the Other 1500–1876—A Computerized Analysis". An interdisciplinary approach is intended. The call is addressed to all researchers, regardless of research discipline. A peer-reviewed publication of the contributions is planned. The presentation languages are preferably English or German. Please send a **proposal** of approximately **250 words** and a **short CV** to Doris Gruber ([doris.gruber \(at\) oeaw.ac.at](mailto:doris.gruber@oeaw.ac.at)) by **07.01.2019**.

