

Abstract und Bio zum Beitrag Patrick Aprent

Digitales Kulturerbe: Zugang, Vernetzung und Darstellung

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ABSTRACT:

Anna Blumlacher (1823–1907) was a theatre actress and manager in the 19th century. During her almost 80-year long career, she played on more than 70 stages, mostly in provincial cities and towns of the Habsburg monarchy. Blumlacher's practise and rich itinerary, present fundamental findings on theatre and cultural life in the 19th century, and her life and work offer new perspectives for studies on the social group of "Theaterleute", the factor of mobility in the context of professional theatre and the role of women as entrepreneurs in the performing arts. The research project "Theatre Topography – The Itinerary of Anna Blumlacher" combines historiographical research with digital analysis and visualisation methods, and is developing a web application to process, curate, explore and present its data and findings.

Technological developments and linkage possibilities offer great potential to explore and present our cultural heritage. Within the humanities we can process larger amounts of data/information, we can interlink information, and we can gain new perspectives on our subject matter. Yet there is untapped potential in areas such as availability of data/information, collaborations between scientists and institutions, and presentation and visualisation. The motivation behind the Anna Blumlacher project and web application is to contribute with new approaches to these topics.

Blumlacher's practise is documented in diverse archival sources such as handwritten notes and diaries, historical articles, theatre almanacs and police records. Many of these sources will be digitised and transcribed and are openly accessible as data tables for further investigations in the field of theatre and cultural studies and beyond (i.e. mobility studies, gender studies, social history). This data forms the basis for the before mentioned Anna Blumlacher web application which is both, an adaptive research tool and a presentation platform. Good design and visualisation are essential to mediate scientific findings to a broader audience and therefore key to aspects of outreach and presentation. By offering the user different ways to explore the Anna Blumlacher project via the app, I want to evoke interest that subsequently leads to possible participation (citizen science), and raises awareness on our subject or the humanities in general. Therefore, as a main feature, the app renders the data and findings into an interactive journey following Anna Blumlacher's path, compiling an interactive map, digitised artefacts and related text sections. Moreover it allows to access the project in form of chronical episodes or thematic collections. Also essential are the app's analysis-tools, to visualise person networks or geo-temporal relations and shed light on interrelations that would otherwise remain hidden, such as the factor of mobility within professional theatre in the 19th century. Furthermore, the project is a collaborative effort with Paul S. Ulrich (collections of 19th century theatre almanachs and journals), and innovative projects within the digital humanities, such as the HistoGIS development (ACDH – Austrian Academy of Sciences).

BIO:

Mag. phil. Patrick Aprent, BSc. studied Theatre, Film and Media Studies at the University of Vienna and Architecture at the TU Wien. He is appointed at the Austrian Academy of Sciences at the Institute OREA as a technical research assistant, and as a researcher at the Institute IKT and ACDH.

The research project "Theatre topography – The itinerary of Anna Blumlacher" is based on Aprent's diploma thesis "Anna Blumlacher. Ein Beitrag zur Theatertopographie im 19. Jahrhundert". During his work on the thesis his interest in the methods and tools of the digital humanities grew, and he developed proficient skills in the field. Besides his focus on theatre historiography, Aprent's main interest lies in digital editions and information visualisation, where he brings in addition ideas from his background in architecture and the arts.

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