Call for Papers

Modeling semantically Enriched Digital Edition of Accounts (MEDEA)

Account books have long been used as primary sources for economic and social history since they allow scholars to explore the development of economic behavior on both a macro- and micro-structural level. A number of projects in Europe and the United States have begun to explore models for digitizing such sources.

The Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) has developed useful models to encode texts and digital scholarly editions, and the semantic web offers opportunities to collect and compare data from multiple digital projects. The MEDEA project looks at these methods with the goal of developing broad standards for producing semantically enriched digital editions of accounts. It will foster discussion of benefits and deficiencies in existing standards by bringing together economic historians, scholarly editors, and technical experts to discuss and test the emerging methods for semantic markup of account books. For this purpose we call for contributions of scholars with experiences in the scholarly edition of historical financial records and ideas about how to use digital methods within this context.

We invite proposals for participation in our first workshop, which will be held in Regensburg (Germany), Oct. 22-24, 2015. Participants will present current research projects using data from historical account books, describe the encoding models of their projects, and share ideas for a common model. The discussions and examples will focus on a set of questions intended to elucidate the features of accounts of greatest interest to scholars. Thus the activities will focus on the following issues:

- How might we model the economic activities recorded in these documents? In particular: What models of bookkeeping were followed historically and how can they be represented formally? Are data models developed for modern business reporting helpful?
- How can we model the economic reality behind the texts? Can we establish common resources on metrics and currencies or even the value of money that can be reused in other projects? Is it possible to build common taxonomies of commodities and services to facilitate the comparison of financial information recorded at different places and times? That is, can we develop references on the order of name authorities and standards for geo-referencing?
- How might we integrate topological information of the transcription with its financial interpretation? Is the “table” an appropriate method? What possibilities are offered by the TEI Manuscripts module and use of the tei:zone element?
- How can we integrate a topological/documentary approach and the growing linguistic interest in the texts with the interpretations that economic and social historians extract from the documents?
Proposals should not exceed 700 words and should be submitted to medea.workshop@ur.de by August 24, 2015. The programme committee will assess the proposals and notify applicants no later than September 2, 2015. We particularly encourage proposals from early-career researchers from Europe and from the United States. A limited budget is available to support costs of travel and accommodation. If there remain any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us: medea.workshop@ur.de

See more details on the project at http://medea.hypotheses.org/.

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