

Rossella Baldi
Institut d'histoire de l'art et de muséologie
Université de Neuchâtel
rossella.baldi@unine.ch

Martin Stuber
Historisches Institut
Universität Bern
martin.stuber@unibe.ch

ESHS DIGITAL HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM, BARCELONA 2024

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES:

QUESTIONS ON THE APPLICATION OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Rana Brentjes (MPIWG), Floor Koeleman (Université de Lausanne), Jade Norindr (Observatoire de Paris)

Questioning the participatory dimension of the link between libraries and museums collections thanks to a Citizen science project

The research project *Bibliothèques et musées en Suisse 18e-19e siècle* (Université de Neuchâtel) is dedicated to exploring the forgotten link between library and museum collections in Switzerland. With the exception of a few studies, objects have tended to be excluded from the general history of libraries, which has privileged to focus on the history of education, reading practices, architecture and institutions.

The project and the hallerNet platform (<http://www.hallernet.org>) — which specializes in digital editions exploring knowledge and scientific networks for the period 1700-1850 — have therefore been working together since 2022 to produce digital data that will allow the study of natural history cabinets in 18th-century Swiss private and public collections. This collaboration includes a Citizen science project. A dozen of senior citizens have transcribed sources extracted from the registers of the Neuchâtel authorities and the minutes of the city's cultural institutions, i.e. its library and its natural history cabinet whose objects were instrumental in the creation of the city's museums network. The edition material will soon be edited on hallerNet with a particular attention to prosopographic data, in order to shed light on the cultural politics of a city between the French Revolution and 1848.

Our paper will address the challenges of this collaborative editing, and at its social, technical and historical dimensions. By highlighting the participatory dimension of research, Citizen Science allows to better understand a historical phenomenon such as the emergence of museums, whose participatory dimension was a key factor in their success.

Rossella Baldi is an art historian and is currently an associate of the *Bibliothèques et musées en Suisse 18e-19e siècle* project (University of Neuchâtel), of which she coordinates several sections. Her research interests include the history of science and technology, the history of natural history collections and travel.

Martin Stuber is a senior scientist at the Historical Institute of the University of Bern and head of the data and editing platform hallerNet. He has written numerous publications on Albrecht von Haller, the scholarly networks in the Republic of Letters and the Economic Enlightenment.