



2009 WORKSHOP

IDENTIFYING THE PERSON: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

St Antony's College, University of Oxford

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Abstract

identifizierung.org – Project Outline

STEFAN GRUBER & DANIEL MESSNER, UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA

Our project is in a phase of re-development. We are currently working on a revised application for the fellowship program DOC-team of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, which is due in October 2009. In our research ambitions, we are particularly concerned with the question of how identification technologies work in specific historical, social and political settings. The aim of our project is to analyze the modes of personal identification in different contexts over a long period of time, from the 18th up to the 21st century. Our geographical focus is on Austria, that is to say the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. At the moment, we are drafting detailed designs for our individual dissertations:

STEPHAN GRUBER is working on individual identification around 1800 (ca. 1780–1850) by means of search warrants, individual descriptions, passports and similar documents. His research focuses on the modes of description and adscription, on social sorting and on loopholes. His ambition is to join a microhistorical approach with a history of official institutions (police, administration etc).

DANIEL MESSNER is working on visualization technologies, in particular in the context of the police and in criminology around 1900 in Vienna. He is interested in the implementation of these technologies as well as in the attempt to classify and archive the data pools that were produced by the application of these technologies in police activities.

CHRISTOPH MUSIK, who recently joined our team, brings a Science and Technology Studies (STS) approach into the project. He is interested in the question of how our machines and robots are being taught to see and recognize objects as well as humans, their movements, interactions and feelings.

The Documentation of Individual Identity:

Historical and Comparative Perspectives since 1500

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