Marie Isabel Matthews-Schlinzig (STSM)

Background: The impetus for this project grew out of a presentation I gave at a meeting of Working Group 4: Documents and Collections in The Hague in 2016. The paper discussed various approaches to defining letter genres in different European languages, described examples of selected early modern letter genres, and thematised the challenges of relating historical letter classes to contemporary concepts of letter genres. Discussion of my paper in The Hague revealed the need for further research into this subject and in particular for focused reflection on how to integrate information on letter genres into the data sets of digital humanities projects (e.g. digital editions or catalogues of correspondence). Aims The planned STSM directly addresses one of the principle tasks outlined in the agenda of Working Group 4 which is 'to contribute to the refinement of a shared data model which includes common definitions of the physical features of the letter, its basic genres, and its modes of dissemination and preservation' (http://www.republicofletters.net/index.php/working-groups/documents-and-collection/).

The main aims of the STSM are: 1. to deliver a consolidated account of the current state of international research on letter genres across a range of disciplines; 2. to highlight particular challenges with which conceptualizations of letter genres are confronted; and 3. to develop suggestions on how to overcome these challenges with the immediate aim of enabling the appropriate and helpful integration of information on letter genres into current and future sets of descriptive metadata.

Work planned: In realizing this project, I will draw both on my personal research into early modern letter writing cultures and letter genres (cf. my monograph *Abschiedsbriefe in Literatur und Kultur des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin/Boston 2012) and my work as a member of the interdisciplinary publishing project *Handbuch Brief* (Letters – A Handbook; 2014–2019). I will also conduct additional research into recent discussions of letter theory and genre theory. The STSM will last 17 days and take place from 29 November 2017 to 15 December 2017. Research and writing will take place in parallel and follow the outline below: I. Definitions II. Historical letter classes III. Modern concepts IV. Letter genres in metadata Host institution My main reason for choosing Aarhus University as host institution for this STSM is the opportunity to work with Prof. Eve-Marie Becker in the School of Culture and Society, Faculty of Arts. Prof. Becker is an expert in early Christian letter writing cultures and has published widely on the subject. The interdisciplinary dialogue with her will be valuable for my research and also beneficial for her work. As one of the leading research institutions in Denmark, Aarhus University is a very suitable setting for my STSM.

Results and benefits to COST Action IS1310: The STSM will result in a paper of min. 4,000 words in length. The text will be published as part of a larger chapter written collectively by members of Working Group 4, including group leader Elizabethanne Boran. The chapter will be published in the collection Reassembling the Republic of Letters: Systems, Standards, Scholarship with Göttingen Press; this book will constitute one of the principal outputs of the COST Action. Benefits to the applicant A clearer sense of how letter genres should be conceptualized and how information on such genres could be usefully included in sets of descriptive metadata will also benefit the larger – and potentially collaborative and international – interdisciplinary research project I am currently developing. The project focuses on European children's creative output and its cultural contexts from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Alongside drawings, diaries, and other child-made artefacts, children's correspondence will form a core source material for this project. In the longer run, I would also like to develop a database that records information on archival (and other types of) holdings of child-made sources.