

Call for Papers

**Digital History Lab Tbilisi 2026**

Spring School, Georgia Branch Office: Tools, Archives, and Local Voices  
in the South Caucasus and beyond

*Georgia Branch Office of the Max Weber Foundation in Tbilisi, March 30–April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026*

Submission Deadline: **January 15th, 2026**

Digital history is developing with great pace, reshaping how historians engage computationally with sources and archives at scale. While global knowledge production centres and infrastructures lead the development of the largest and most advanced digital history projects, regions like the South Caucasus often rely largely on externally produced tools and knowledge. The potential of digital humanities and Open Science to reshape the writing of history remains underexplored.

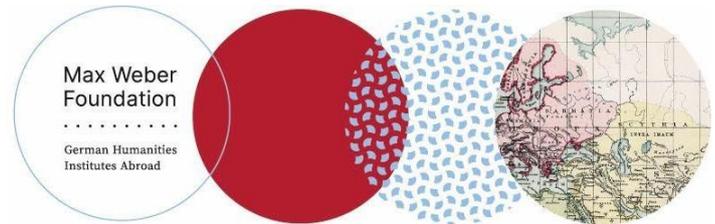
This spring school will highlight ways of engaging with digital sources and methods, with a specific focus on the needs of early-career historians in the South Caucasus. It is designed not only for scholars who identify as digital historians but also for professionals working in galleries libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) interested in how new digital possibilities can inform their work. We aim to help young researchers address their own challenges and projects, exploring questions such as: How can digital tools be used effectively? What tools and databases does the Max Weber Foundation offer and how can they be used? How can Artificial Intelligence be leveraged in historical research? How can digital tools be used to cross the (post)colonial and (post)Soviet digital divides?

The Digital History Lab will be a venue to build a community of historians interested in testing new tools and approaches to presenting historical materials, including for public audiences, such as blog posts. Each participant will be asked to write a short reflection on the insights gained from the Spring School, with the option of publishing it as a blog post.

**Core Themes**

The spring school will delve into key aspects of digital history, including:

- Critical reflection on the role and meaning of digitization in the post-imperial and post-Soviet space: Examining how digitization affects narratives and creates new



inequalities or opportunities, including the decolonization debate in Digital History.

- New methods and tools: Providing insights into the latest developments in the field, including the role of Artificial Intelligence and practical steps for digital projects.
- Resource availability: Presenting the resources from the Max Weber Foundation, and from German and international research organizations and libraries, available via open access and on site.
- Standards, Open Science C Sustainability: Applying FAIR principles, persistent identifiers (DOIs/ORCID), interoperable formats/IIIF and rich metadata to enable reproducible workflows, responsible open data/code, and long-term preservation via trusted repositories—aligned with GDPR and data sovereignty.
- Projects of young researchers: Participants present their own projects for discussion with the experts, focusing on how digital methods can enhance ongoing research projects.

## Teachers and Partners

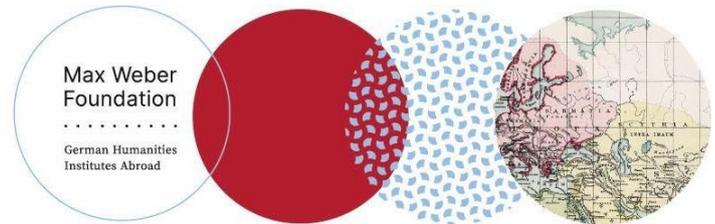
Dr. Dinara Gagarina: Researcher at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and at Herder Institute Marburg. She is an expert on Digital History, working on the DH landscape in Central Asia, developing projects with partners on the history of forced migrations and cultural heritage preservation.

Teona Iashvili: Director of the National Archives of Georgia. She will present various activities and opportunities of the archive in the field of digitization of collections and digital history.

Lali Kakhidze and Prof. Dr. Oliver Reisner: Have developed databases in collaboration with the Georgian National Archives focusing on the history of Germans in the South Caucasus, and are involved in DH-initiatives at Ilia State University. This work offers an example of best practice, but also highlights the problems involved in such initiatives.

Dr. Mareike König: A leading voice in the digital-history-debate in Germany. She has helped develop infrastructures such as the German-language Hypotheses blogging platform and has published reflective pieces on the implications of digital transformation and its challenges. She will share insights into the most recent developments, including Open Science practices and the role of Artificial Intelligence.

Dr. Nanette Reißler-Pipka: The Max Weber Foundation's expert in digital research infrastructure, data stewardship and implementing concrete digital projects. She will present recent projects, including their technical infrastructure, offer examples of best practice, and detail concrete technical steps.



## Who should apply?

Young historians – M.A. candidates, PhD-students and Postdocs – working in or on the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe, who would like to learn about recent trends and methodologies in Digital History.

Scholars, who have already worked with digital sources and would like to discuss their current projects with professionals and experts.

GLAM professionals who are interested in collaboration with researchers on digital projects.

## How to apply?

Please, send a short application of around 500 words to the Max Weber Office in Tbilisi. The application should include:

- A short CV
- An abstract of the project that you are currently working on.
- A short statement on what motivates you to participate and what would you be particularly interested to learn.

**Deadline for applications:** January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

## Funding

Participants from Central Asia, the South Caucasus and Eastern Europe are eligible for travel grants, according to the rules of Max Weber Foundation Mobility Funding (<https://mwsgeorgia.hypotheses.org/9626>). Please indicate whether you will need such funding in your application.