

Call for Proposals

Interreligious Connectivity - Digitally Explored

Location and date: University of Copenhagen, 17–19. April 2024

Organizers: Jacob Langeloh and Jan Loop

Digital technologies are revolutionizing how we store, access, and exchange knowledge. In this workshop, we explore how these technologies can be used in research on historical interreligious connectivity.

“Connectivity”, understood as a structural feature that enables and promotes the formation of complex networks, characterises both the object and the process of research on historical interreligious encounters. Such encounters generally show a high degree of intertextuality, involving the citation of holy texts and their commentaries, the repetition of common themes, and a deep reliance on earlier polemical and scholarly works. The research field itself is inherently interdisciplinary and highly dynamic, with new connections emerging and old ones being challenged as sources are discovered and studied.

The workshop builds on the hypothesis that these connective characteristics make digital methods particularly promising in research on interreligious encounters. For instance, common data standards could facilitate communication between researchers, allowing them to share new findings, update information, and merge data sets. Similarly, new methods of data analysis enable scholars to search, process, and visualize such information in unprecedented ways, and, with the help of Natural Language Processing, operations of language interpretation are being automated.

The specific possibilities—and potential challenges—of these methods in studying interreligious connectivity remain largely underexplored. This workshop aims to showcase ongoing projects that use digital methods to improve our understanding of historical interreligious encounters, to evaluate best practices, and to offer a platform for new networks and collaborations. In addition, we hope to provide an entry point to scholars who want to start using digital methods in their research.

The workshop will consist of presentations by participants and keynote speakers, hands-on sessions in which specific methods are introduced, and a ‘connectathlon’ that allows participants to explore potential collaborations.

We invite contributions across a wide range of topics. Presentations might address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- *Forms of interconnectivity and intertextuality:* How does interreligious connectivity manifest itself in research and in its sources? In what way are sources and findings connected to each other, and how can such connections be categorized?
- *Representing interconnectivity as data:* What kind of data is being recorded from such sources? What data can or should be recorded in the future?
- *Using and improving digital tools:* What digital tools or methods are being used or should be used to study interreligious connectivity? What are their strengths and limitations?
- *Conducting digital analyses:* What can the analysis of data that has already been gathered tell us about historical forms of religious interconnectivity?
- *Building shared conceptions of interconnectivity:* How can we identify common topics and themes within interreligious encounters? What would a shared repertoire of descriptive categories look like, and how can we develop one?

- How can “*shared conceptualizations*” of other areas of interreligious research lead to generating interoperable, shareable data?

Please send your proposal for a presentation (max. 250 words) and a short biography (max. 150 words) by December 7th, 2023 to: jacob.langeloh@teol.ku.dk If you have questions regarding the workshop or anything related, please send them to the aforementioned address.

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