

Networked Texts and Images in Early Modern Jewish Mystical Cosmographs

Initiative: zukunft.niedersachsen (nur ausgewählte Ausschreibungen)

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Jewish mysticism is characterized by its "objective" approach to the Divine. Rather than prioritize subjective experience, Jews presented their mystical insights in cartographic detail. In this spirit, they drafted divinity maps on large parchment sheets. Central to kabbalistic practice since the fourteenth century, these maps—known as ilanot (trees)—only recently attracted scholarly attention. Their complex integration of texts and images makes the research and publication of ilanot daunting tasks. The cooperating teams of the University of Haifa and the Göttingen State and University Library successfully developed a basic infrastructure to address these unique challenges in a previous collaboration. The new project aims to develop the functionalities required for a new corpus: early modern ilanot. In addition to visualizing a far more complicated topography, early modern ilanot are maps-in-motion that bring a time-line sensibility to the representation of the emanatory chain of heavenly worlds. To enable their research and presentation, new functionalities must be developed to augment those currently found on the Maps of God portal. The topological description of ilanot and their features as well as iconographic and textual variation of the latter, automatic text reuse detection, ontology-based navigation and visualisation, and database integration are the core of the project. Together, they will usher in a new era of scholarship, the impact of which will be broadly felt. Resources will also be allocated to the enhancement of the end-user experience as well as to ensuring the long-term viability of the platform.

Projektbeteiligte

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