Towards a Contextual Canon of Theology – A Network-based Approach to German Academic Theology (1820–1870)

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The historiography of theology generally starts with a fixed canon of authors and texts. Since this approach works well for studying the diachronic development of doctrine and theology, the canon that results hardly gives any insight into the synchronous contextuality of theology. In this article, I argue that the study of theology would benefit greatly from a more contextualised approach to the discipline. Because this article deals with the period 1820–1870, I substantiate this claim by referring to some contextual factors which play a major role in nineteenth century theology. First, the theological landscape became increasingly national in character. People became more mobile and, as a consequence, theologians could easily maintain contact with other theologians or take positions elsewhere in or outside Germany. Second, theology underwent a process of professionalisation. Academic journals, for instance, developed not only into an important venue for negotiation of theological positions and research results, but became an indispensable part of the career paths of theologians.

In traditional history of theology research, which is based in texts primarily, aspects of the connections between scholars and others who developed discourses can be reconstructed by tracing textual references. But digital tools for social network research make a more systematic approach to the processes of professionalisation and nationalisation of academic discourses on theology possible. In this essay, I introduce this methodology and showcase some of its results for the historiography of theology. After an introduction to nineteenth century academic theology, social network analysis and a description of the methodology employed, I look at church administrations and societies as examples of the contextual nature of academic theology. I conclude with discussing a network-based version of a ‹contemporaneous canon› of academic theology in the period 1820–1870, i.e. a canon of theology contemporaneous with the period in question itself and not a canon derived from twentieth or twenty-first century concerns.

Academic theology in transition

The long nineteenth century was a period of profound transformation for almost every domain of society. For the churches, the increasing critique of religious authority and beliefs and an observed decline of religiosity led to a feeling that religion was undergoing a crisis, often referred to as secularisation.[1] The theological faculties, which were still closely connected to the churches, felt that a response to the new situation of church and society was necessary. Over the course of the nineteenth century, different answers to these questions were given that formed the basis for the genesis of theological parties and schools.

In the early 1820s, academic theology found itself in a situation of both crisis and new opportunities.[2] In the Napoleonic era, the academic landscape had been profoundly reorganised. Universities had been closed or founded, other universities went through a process of reorganisation or innovation. Of particular importance was the newly founded University of Berlin, which was organised according to the new ideals of thinkers like Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schleiermacher. At the University of Berlin, the philosophical faculty was awarded a leadership role, as new ideals of scholarship and academic formation were introduced. The experiment became an important inspiration for other universities. Nonethelesss, because financial means could be scarce and traditional practices and structures could be dominant, not all universities were able or willing to follow the path of innovation.[3]

In the period between 1820 and 1870, both religiosity and academic theology were stuck between the states and the larger space of the German ‹nation›.

[1] Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, ‹Dechristianisierung›. Zur Problemgeschichte eines kulturpolitischen Topos, in: Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung, Göttingen 1997, 32–66; Hartmut Lehmann, Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung zur Erforschung von Prozessen der Dechristianisierung und der Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa, in: idem, Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa, Göttingen 1997, 9–16; Lucian Hölscher, Semantic Structures of Religious Change in Modern Germany, in: Werner Ustorf/Hugh McLeod (eds.), The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000, Cambridge 2003, 184–98.

[2] Christophe Charle, Patterns, in: Walter Rüegg (ed.), A History of the University in Europe. Universities in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century (1800–1945) (vol. III), Cambridge/New York 2004, 33–80; Thomas Albert Howard, Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University, Oxford/New York 2006.

[3] Peter Moraw, Humboldt in Giessen. Zur Professorenberufung an einer deutschen Universität des 19. Jahrhunderts, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft, 10/1 (1984), 47–71; Charles E. McClelland, Die deutschen Hochschullehrer als Elite 1815–1850, in: Klaus Schwabe (ed.), Deutsche Hochschullehrer als Elite 1815–1945, Boppard am Rhein 1988, 27–54 (39–40).

Churches and universities were both state institutions.[4] Aside from major confessional differences between the territorial churches in Germany, also (liturgical) traditions and church law also differed widely from region to region. As training institutes for the clergy, the theological faculties had to take the situation in their own state into considersation. At the same time, the theological professors were relatively mobile. Of the 344 professors of theology who were active in this period, around a hundred worked at the universities of two or more different states.

The view professors of theology had of themselves was not uniform. While some professors defined their position in terms of scholarly ideals, others positioned themselves close to the clergy.[5] In general, the distance between professors and a specific congregation increased, because fewer professors combined both ecclesial office and a professorship. On the other hand, professors were involved in new administrative organs, like consistories and synods. In this period, institutions developed which allowed professors to interact with society in new ways. The societies, for example, offered opportunities for contacts with both clergy and laity. Finally, the rise of theological journals made a more direct and easily accessible communication of the results of theological research possible.

Social network analysis: paradigm and method

Social network analysis developed over the twentieth century and received an important impulse from the introduction of digital tools at the beginning of the twenty-first.[6] Social network research is experiencing a steady rise in the humanities.[7] This type of analysis is based in a structuralist approach to reality in which the network metaphor is prominent.[8] The main consequence of this metaphor is

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[4] Johannes Wischmeyer, Theologiae Facultas. Rahmenbedingungen, Akteure und Wissenschaftsorganisation protestantischer Universitätstheologie in Tübingen, Jena, Erlangen und Berlin 1850–1870, Berlin/New York 2008, 83–122.

[5] Wischmeyer, Theologiae Facultas (see note 4), 245-247. Compare Oliver Janz, Kirche, Staat und Bürgertum in Preussen. Pfarrhaus und Pfarrerschaft im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert, in: Luise Schorn-Schütte/Walter Sparn (eds.), Evangelische Pfarrer. Zur sozialen und politischen Rolle einer bürgerlichen Gruppe in der deutschen Gesellschaft des 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln 1997, 128–47 (135–136).

[6] Linton C. Freeman, The Development of Social Network Analysis. A Study in the Sociology of Science, Vancouver (BC Canada) 2004.

[7] Ruth Ahnert et al., The Network Turn. Changing Perspectives in the Humanities, Cambridge/New York/Port Melbourne/New Delhi/Singapore 2022.

[8] Introductions to the discipline include, for the theoretical part: Stanley Wassermann and Katherine Faust, Social Network Analysis. Methods and Applications, Cambridge/New York 1995; with a focus on applications, John Scott and Peter J. Carrington (eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis, London/ Thousand Oaks (Cal.)/New Delhi 2014; popular: Albert-László Barabási, Network Science (online edition), Cambridge 2016, in: ‹http://networksciencebook.com/› (10.10.2023).

that reality is viewed as relational. A network consists of elements (called nodes) which are connected by relationships (called edges). In this project, the nodes represent either individuals or institutions and edges represent participation by the individual in an institution.

Every metaphor uncovers specific aspects of reality while excluding other elements from view. Since the development of nineteenth century academic theology was to a large extent a process of an increasing level of connection between individuals and institutions, the network metaphor can help to understand these processes. Social network analysis consists of two closely related sets of methods which, respectively, employ visualisation and calculation as primary means. In the project underlying this article, both sets have been employed selectively. This section will address the compilation of a database, visualisation of networks and calculations of individual positions in this order.

For this project, a database has been compiled which exists of 9,238 nodes and 10,794 edges. The nodes are individuals who belong to 138 different institutions. These institutions include 21 theological faculties[9], 91 church administrative bodies[10], seven Protestant societies[11] and five theological journals.[12] Given that the professors of theology were the main subject of this project, they have been generously included, as the 344 full and associate professors of all German-speaking Protestant faculties of theology are covered by the database. The church administrative bodies have been included in as far as they were operated on a state or, for the larger states, provincial level. Here, mention in a *Staatshandbuch* has generally been taken as a criterium for inclusion in this study. For the societies and journals, institutions with a national scope have been selected.

In the compilation of a database, two issues required specific attention. In the first place, different levels of participation had to be accounted for. Participation differs between institutions, since a publication in the same journal produces a different relationship than a position at the same university. But in one particular institution, different roles were possible too. In a society, one can, for example,

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[9] The theological faculties of the universities of Basel, Berlin, Bern, Bonn, Breslau, Dorpat, Erlangen, Giessen, Greifswald, Göttingen, Halle, Heidelberg, Jena, Leipzig, Kiel, Marburg, Königsberg, Rostock, Tübingen, Wien and Zürich are included as a whole. Other universities and faculties were only included as they were part of an individual theological career.

[10] Belonging to the state churches of Baden, Bayern, Hannover, Großh. Hessen, Kurhessen, Holstein, Lauenberg, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Nassau, Oldenburg, Österreich, Preußen, Freist. Sachsen, Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach, Schleswig, Württemberg.

[11] The main assemblies of the Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz, Evangelical Alliance, Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung, Kirchentag, Konferenz für innere Mission, Konferenz Abgeordnete evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchenregimente and Protestantentag.

[12] The Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben, Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie, Theologische Studien und Kritiken, Zeitschrift für historische Theologie and Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie.

participate as a board member, a lecturer or simply as a participant. This problem has been solved by attributing a weight to the edges, which implies that, in both calculation and visualisation, the impact of different kinds of relationships is differentiated. Second, development over time is an important characteristic of historical network research. In this dataset, relations could change over time too. For that reason, relations and their weights are timestamped and can change over time, to show that participation could take different forms for the same individual.

For visualisation and calculation, the digital application Gephi has been used.[13] The rise of digital tools like Gephi, is behind the increasing popularity of visualisations in network research. It should be noted that visualisations are not neutral but represent an interpretation of the data. In this article, this dimension is addressed by adding of extensive captions which account for the choices made in the representation of the data. Within these boundaries, network visualisations are an important tool to inspect, study, and understand large amounts of visual data.

In network visualisations, the nodes are represented by dots and the edges by lines between these dots. Force-directed layout algorithms, i.e., Yifan Hu and Gephi's own ForceAtlas2 algorithm have been utilised in the visualisations.[14] The operations of the force-directed algorithm imitate gravity: connected nodes attract each other, whereas unconnected nodes move to the margin. The stronger the connection between the nodes (number and weight of connections), the greater the attraction between them.

Visualisations, especially of large amounts of data, are particularly suited for showing the larger patterns of communities.[15] Statistic calculations are needed to gain insight in the positions of individuals. Social network analysis suggests different procedures for understanding the prominence of central nodes.[16] This might not come as a surprise, as the concept of prominence as such is already far from univocal. Because none of the statistical procedures offers a comprehensive understanding of prominence, they are used in complementary fashion.

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[13] Mathieu Bastian/Sebastien Heymann/Mathieu Jacomy, Gephi. An open source software for exploring and manipulating networks, in: International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, 2009, 361–362; Daniela van Geenen, Critical Affordance Analysis for Digital Methods. The Case of Gephi, in: Marcus Burkhardt/Mary Shnayien/Katja Grashöfer (eds.), Explorations in Digital Cultures, Lüneburg 2020, in: ‹https://explorations.meson.press/chapters/critical-affordance-analysis-for-digital-methods-the-case-of-gephi/› (10.10.2023).

[14] Mathieu Jacomy et al., ForceAtlas2, a continuous graph layout algorithm for handy network visualization designed for the Gephi software, in: PLoS ONE, 9/6 (2014), 1–12.

[15] Tomasso Venturini i.a., How to Tell Stories with Networks, in: Mirko Tobias Schäfer/Karin van Es (eds.), The Datafied Society. Studying Culture through Data, Amsterdam 2018, 155–70; Mathieu Jacomy, Situating Visual Networks Analysis, Diss., 2021.

[16] Martin Grandjean/Mathieu Jacomy, Translating Networks. Assessing Correspondence Between Network Visualisation and Analytics, in: Digital Humanities Conference, 2019.

In the most straightforward sense, prominence can be measured by counting the number of roles and functions ((weighted) outdegree). A theologian could also derive prominence from being the most or best-connected individual in a specific region of the theological landscape (measured by Betweenness, undirected interpretation of the graph). These actors were prominent because they could mediate between these distinct regions and the centre of the landscape. For example, some universities barely participated in national initiatives, which made the few theologians who did participate prominent for their own institution. Finally, Eigenvector/prestige measures prominence as the proximity to other prominent figures in the network.

Academic theologians between church and association

The function of social network analysis for contextualising academic theology is illustrated by means of two types of institutions, i.e. church administration and societies. These two instances are particularly interesting as they demonstrate the dynamics of professionalisation and nationalisation.

Figure 1 shows a representation of the network of organisations in church administration. To enhance the readability of the visualisation, the nodes which represent individual members have been minimised and bear no label. The institutions have been named and coded between brackets to show which state they belonged to.

At a first reading, it already becomes clear that there is only a limited number of connections between the different institutions. The institutions that were connected generally belonged to the same state church. This impression is reinforced when we realise that this visualisation deals with the whole period 1820–1870. The vast majority of those involved in church administration consisted of people without previous experience in administrative bodies of other state churches. A likely explanation for this situation is that church administrations were generally staffed by civil servants and local clergymen who generally had a strong connection to the state.

Theologians traditionally participated in church administration.[17] In the different consistories, which had existed in many regions for some centuries, one or two positions were held by academic theologians. In newer institutions as well, like the supreme church councils, which were introduced after 1848, and the synods, a number of chairs were reserved for academic theologians. The visualisation

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[17] Lucian Hölscher, Geschichte der protestantischen Frömmigkeit in Deutschland, München 2005, 243–253; Wischmeyer, Theologiae Facultas (see note 4), 252–254.

of the network of church administrations shows that the professors of theology had a crucial position in these institutions.

For this fifty-year period, only five individuals had a position in two different state churches. These individuals have been coded by the letter A–E. Of these five individuals, four were (former) professors of theology, i.e. Isaac August Dorner (A), Benno Bruno Brückner (B), Gottlieb Christoph Adolf von Harleß (C) and Wilhelm Theophor Dittenberger (D). The letter E represents Johann Friedrich Heinrich Schwabe, who accepted a call from Weimar to Darmstadt but died after only a year in service. It can be concluded that the few exceptions to the rule that staffing took place inside within one state were academic theologians. In addition, the great mobility of academic theologians in general had as a consequence that a number of those without a previous position in church administration too, had experience in another state church.

The persistence of the state-based organisation of the Protestant churches in Germany was one of the major challenges for Protestantism throughout the nineteenth century. Different plans for closer collaboration between churches failed to materialise. From the early 1840s, but especially after 1848, a number of societies developed which facilitated collaboration and communication between Protestant Christians all over Germany. The enthusiasm for these societies of professors of theology and church administrators showed that there was a great desire for a higher level of connection between Protestants throughout Germany.

The history of Protestant societies in Germany started in the eighteenth century and continued over the nineteenth. Because there was no freedom of association in Germany before 1848, societies were strongly dependent on local regulations and protection by elites. Under these conditions, a patchwork of Protestant associations developed which were involved in, for example, mission, charity or the distribution of Bibles and tracts. In the early 1840s, initiatives were taken which had a larger aim. An important example in Germany was the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung*.[18] Based in Britain, the *Evangelical Alliance* aimed at unity between Protestants all over Europe and gained some supporters in Germany too.[19]

As a response to the revolutionary events of 1848, the *Kirchentag* and the *Conferenz für innere Mission* aimed at closer cooperation between the different

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[18] Heiner Grote, Konfessionalistische und unionistische Orientierung am Beispiel des Gustav-Adolf-Vereins und des evangelischen Bundes, in: Wolf-Dieter Hauschild (ed.), Das deutsche Luthertum und die Unionsproblematik im 19. Jahrhundert, Gütersloh 1991, 110–30; Kevin Cramer, The Cult of Gustavus Adolphus. Protestant Identity and German Nationalism, in: Helmut Walser Smith, Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914, Oxford/New York 2001, 97–120.

[19] Nicolas M. Railton, No North Sea. The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2000, 169–193.

Protestant churches and between different charitable initiatives. Over the years, both assemblies were important platforms for debates between Protestants from different German states. Since the *Kirchentags* original aim – a confederation of churches – was not achieved, a council of high church administrators, the *Conferenz von Abgeordneten der oberste Kirchenbehörden* or *Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz* was formed.[20] Between 1853 and 1856, the Lutheran state churches held a separate convocation, which dealt primarily with matters of liturgy. Finally, in 1863, a new period of societies with a strong church political profile dawned with the foundation of the *Protestantenverein* and its assembly, the *Protestantentag*.[21]

Figure 2 presents the visualisation of the network formed by these societies. This representation makes the professors of theology who participated in more than one association visible. The relative positions of the associations are defined by the participants in common. As the ‹clouds› around the associations suggest, there were many participants who joined more than one society. In general, the major part of the visitors of the associations consisted of members of the clergy and others who had a direct connection to the churches.

The visualisation shows that the *Kirchentag* had a middle position in the landscape. Closely related was the *Conferenz für innere Mission*. This should not be surprising since both assemblies were held consecutively. But the latter *Conferenz für innere Mission* brought a particular audience and participants that were involved in charitable initiatives. Quite close to the *Kirchentag* were the *Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz* and its Lutheran partner, the *Liturgische Konferenz*. Their distance can be explained by the fact that these conferences consisted of a limited number of official representatives of the different state churches.

At some distance were the *Evangelische Allianz* and the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung*. The participants in the *Evangelische Allianz* showed some pecularities. The assembly in Berlin in 1857 was quite a prestigious event, attracting a wide diversity of clergy and theologians, who were not all straightforward supporters of the principles of the society. The German participants in the assemblies abroad, on the other hand, were quite a limited group, which consisted of the more dedicated supporters. Apart from the 1857 participants, the *Evangelische Allianz* would be at a greater distance from the other societies visually. The *Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung* attracted theologians both on the right and left wings of the theological landscape. Its purpose, to support Christians in minority

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[20] Joachim Rogge, Kirchentage und Eisenacher Konferenzen, in: Joachim Rogge/Gerhard Ruhbach (eds.), Die Geschichte der evangelische Kirche der Union. Die Verselbständigung der Kirche unter dem königlichen Summepiskopat (1850–1918), Leipzig 1994, 42–55.

[21] Dorothea-Henriette Noordveld-Lorenz, Gewissen und Kirche. Zum Protestantismusverständnis von Daniel Schenkel, Tübingen 2014, 70–74.

positions, was less complex on a church-political level than the purposes of some other societies. Finally, the *Protestantentag* distanced itself explicitly from existing initiatives. This is reflected in its position in the visualisation and in the number of professors who are positioned closely to this society. This position implies that they were more frequently involved in the *Protestantentag* during the seven years of its existence than in the other societies or assemblies.

The nodes of the professors have been rendered in a grey scale so as to indicate the number of societies they were involved in (the darkness of the node indicates a higher number of societies in which the professor was involved). A first observation is that a high number of professors developed a high level of participation in different societies. Some theologians acquired, for example by being among the founders, a strong position in one particular society, like Christian Leberecht Großmann and Gustav Adolf Fricke in the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf Stiftung* and Daniel Schenkel in the *Protestantenverein*.

None of these societies succeeded in acquiring a truly national scope. All of them, with the exception of the two assemblies of high-level church administrators, attracted the vast majority of visitors from their close neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the societies constituted a national stage, because they brought in representatives and prominent members of the elites from other parts of the country and even from abroad. As such, the societies had an important function in the negotiation of the course of Protestant theology and religious life. This brings us to the question of the extent to which this national stage was open to everybody.

In principle, both clergymen and laypeople could participate in the meetings, again with the exception of those of high-level church administrators. However, some degree of qualification was necessary for a contribution to the proceedings. Even the *Kirchentag*, which explicitly invited the laity to join the debates, remained an initiative in which primarily (high-level) clergymen and professors (of theology) were involved. For a more substantial contribution, as in delivering an address, the prominent clergymen and professors were again the main resource. Becoming a member of the board was often even more complicated, as the board was often comprised of prominent figures from a specific, and central, region.

In practice, only a very limited number of prominent people from other regions travelled to the meetings. For theologians from more distant regions of Germany, a role as an official representative was generally, with the exception of the eventual case in which the assembly convened in that particular region, the only opportunity to participate. For the *Kirchentag* and *Conferenz für innere Mission*, Prussia and the region around Stuttgart remained home regions, the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung* had its power base around Leipzig. The *Pro-*

testantenverein mobilised the liberal parts of Southern Germany, particularly Baden. As a result, a limited number of enthusiasts from these central regions could acquire prominent positions in the society.

Together, the development of church administration and associations reflects some characteristics of the German theological landscape. On the one hand, there was the decentralised and unconnected domain of church administrations. Here, academic theologians stood in close connection to the affairs of the state. From the 1840s onward, a new network of connections across states developed in the societies. The connection to specific regions and the selection procedures for lecturers and board members meant that the societies were not level playing fields.

Towards a contemporaneous canon of academic theology

This final section presents an attempt to construct a ‹contemporaneous canon› based in network data and retrieved by network methodology. This ‹canon› shows which theologians could profit from the institutional opportunities and could acquire a prominent position in the German theological landscape. While the previous section illustrated the development of networks on the basis of the examples of church administration and societies, this section adds theological faculties and scholarly journals to the analysis. Together, these four institutions formed a major part of the professional landscape in which academic theologians were active.

The period 1820–1870 has been divided into two ‹halves›, the periods 1820–1842 and 1843–1870. The major reason for this divide is that, from 1843 onwards, the institutional landscape underwent a series of transformations. New societies were founded, beginning with the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung* (1843) and the *Evangelical Alliance* (1846). The 1850's witnessed the foundation of a number of new theological journals, which led to a considerable differentiation of the national landscape, which had, up to that moment, consisted only of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* and the *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie*. Finally, the 1848 revolutions sparked the development of new forms of church administration. Characteristics of these were the implementation of high church councils and a movement towards increasing involvement of church and theology in church administration at the expense of civil servants.

One of the major merits of a data-based approach to prominence is that it makes visible the presuppositions behind the selection of theologians. Every approximation of prominence is, in the end, based on a limited set of data. Traditionally, prominence was generally studied on the basis of references in a specific textual corpus. The approach presented here focuses primarily on four other indicators of prominence:

1) A central position in the German theological faculties, such as a prominent position at one faculty or subsequent service at a number of different faculties;

2) A central position in church administration, such as in a high church council or at a synod.

3) A central position in national societies, as witnessed by frequent participation or assumption of highly visible roles, like being member of the board or giving lectures;

4) A central position in national theological journals, such as membership in the editorial board or through frequent contribution.

Like other approaches, this approximation of a list of prominent theologians in academic theology leaves out other dimensions of prominence. Most important might be the publication and reception of monographs and participation in regional associations and journals. Generally, these indicators need an alternative approach from a network perspective and cannot be easily fit with the indicators presented. Moreover, it can be argued that these indicators were, indirectly, represented by the institutions studied. The appreciation of one's publications, for example, was often one of the reasons for an appointment as a professor or an invitation to give a lecture at an assembly. Regional associations were often represented formally at national assemblies or attracted the same participants.

Tables 1 and 2 present an alphabetical list of the most prominent theologians for both periods. Since the three different calculations (see above) offer a complementary impression, no absolute ranking has been made. The results of the rankings have been indicated in the second column. In principle, the ranking runs from one to twenty. The only exception is the ranking of the outdegree (absolute number of connections), since different theologians could have the same number of connections. Given that a ranking among theologians with the same degree would be arbitrary, all actors with the same amount of connections have the same ranking. For this reason, the outdegree ranking of the period 1820–1842 runs only from one to two, while the ranking for 1843–1870 runs from one to five. Since 29 individuals had three connections in the period 1820–1842, they are all included in this list. It should be noted that a large number of these actors did not surface in one of the other calculations.

By way of interpretating the results, I sketch the contours of a typology of these prominent theologians, which gives an impression of the reasons behind their prominence. I introduce this typology, however, by two structural remarks on the development in the different periods. In the first place, these lists show the enormous increase in connectedness between theologians over the period 1820–1870. An indication of this increase is the range of outdegree ranking, which ranges from 3–4 connections in the period 1820–1842 and from 8-17 connections between 1843–1870. The increasing connectedness is also reflected in the number

of initiatives in which the theologians on the list participated. In the first period, many prominents only participated in a journal or in a body of church administration, after 1843 no less than thirteen individuals were active in journals and societies and church administrative bodies.

If we focus on the academic careers of those involved, we can observe that these careers tended to consist of activity at a number of universities over the years. Between 1820–1842, the prominent professors worked on average at 1.49 universities and in 1843–1870 this number rose to 1.96. Not only young theologians, like Ludwig Diestel and Richard Adelbert Lipsius rapidly moved from university to university, but senior professors like Isaac August Dorner did as well. In addition, these careers increasingly included positions at universities outside Germany itself. The temporary activities of professors at universities in Switzerland and Austria were an important means by which these universities were connected to German academic life.

In the sparsely connected landscape before 1843, church administration was an important means for forging connections. In the first period, the *senior church administrators* form a first group of prominent theologians. A combination of a professorship and a high position in church administration was quite common at this time. The position of theologians like Ludwig Adam Dieffenbach, Ludwig August Kähler, Ludwig Jedemin Rhesa and Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt was to a large extent based on their position as mediator between the academic landscape and an – often relatively isolated – administration of a state church. Their position in this network analysis suggests the relevance of these prominent individuals as mediators between academic theology and church (administration). Over the years, a number of these church administrators entered into a stronger relationship with the theological landscape by publishing in journals. Senior theologians like David Schulz and Friedrich Heinrich Schwarz started to participate in the newly founded theological journals, thus forging more into connections to the theological landscape. This group of senior theologians was quite typical for the first period and barely found its equal in the second period.

In this first period, the group round the journal *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* formed another important community. Unlike the *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie*, which remained rather marginal, this journal succeeded in forging a new community which included large parts of Germany. Theologians involved with this journal, like Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lücke, Carl Immanuel Nitzsch and Karl Ullmann succeeded into making the journal an important element of the theological landscape. In contrast to the *senior church administrators,* these *community organisers* were at the beginning of their careers and were initially not very much involved with church administration. This group is also quite typical of the first period as well, since later

journals were initiated by senior scholars and did not bring about the same effect in terms of community formation.

Finally, a diverse group of scholars can be characterised as *aspiring scholars*. These theologians, who were primarily based in theological faculties, developed an intense participation in journals. This group included both senior professors and early career scholars. Karl Ludwig Willibald Grimm and Julius Wiggers were examples of the latter group and published often in different journals. As stated, there were also senior scholars who joined the journals. In this first period, scholars of this type make particularly clear how scarce and, therefore, valuable connections to a national network were. One example is Karl Wilhelm Johann Bindemann, who served only for one year as a professor in Greifswald. Given that he, as one of the very few Greifswald professors, published in both *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* and the *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie*, he emerges as a prominent theologian. This might have been the case, compared to his Greifswald colleagues but his impact was probably limited overall.

This problem of the badly connected regions of the landscape seems to have disappeared in the second period. Without exception, the theologians included played a significant role in the different national institutions. But this change also signifies the gradual exclusion of smaller universities and state churches from the landscape. No professors from this list with prominent theologians, for example, served at the universities of Marburg and Giessen, and the role of many other universities like Breslau and Rostock was seriously reduced. All in all, the landscape was increasingly centralised around universities like Bonn, Halle, and Leipzig.

The centralisation of the landscape can also be observed in the genesis of a new type of prominent theologian, which I call the *proto-mandarins*. Theologians of this type, like Isaac August Dorner, Carl Immanuel Nitzsch (in the second period) and Friedrich August Gotttreu Tholuck, had an important voice in any area of the landscape. They were members of the high-level church councils, the boards of the journals and societies and held positions at high-profile universities. Sociologically, there are parallels with Fritz Ringer's definition of the German mandarin for the period 1890–1933.[22] Ringer acknowledges that the type of the mandarin as a scholarly ideal went back to the eighteenth century.[23] On the intellectual level, his description of the mandarins does not fit the pre-1870 situation, but the academic, cultural, and political hegemony of this group shows parallels.

[22] Fritz K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community, 1890–1933, Hanover (New Hampshire) 1990, 5–13.
[23] Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins (see note 22), 81–127.

The theologians of this group were remarkably often supporters of the union between Lutheran and reformed protestants and were often connected to a Prussian university. This period witnesses the formation or crystallisation of a number of competing church political groups. On the liberal side, this development took place especially in societies and journals. Heinrich Julius Holtzmann and Daniel Schenkel derived their position primarily from the foundation of the liberal *Protestantenverein*. On the conservative side, Gottlieb Adolf von Harless was an important leader. For these *party leaders*, their own institutions were an important power base, since they only participated in a limited number of other initiatives, like the *Eisenacher Kirchenkonferenz* and the *Evangelische Verein der Gustav-Adolf-Stiftung*.

The role of groups of *aspiring scholars* became more important in this period. Increasingly, junior scholars published before their first appointment as a professor. In addition, they kept up a high pace of publications during their first years as professors. In this way, theological journals were instrumental in the professionalisation of the discipline and contributed to the differentiation of scholars from the church. The journals facilitated this growing group of scholars in constructing a profile based on scholarly qualities. Examples were Johann Heinrich Christoph Willibald Beyschlag, Ludwig Diestel, Julius Köstlin and Richard Adelbert Lipsius.

Similar ideals reached senior scholars as well. As the junior scholars occasionally participated in the societies, the older generation was more often active in boards and at the meetings. Theologians like Johann Peter Lange and Karl Heinrich Sack both published frequently and participated often in German Protestant meetings. This group was defined by its relationship to the churches, which elicits the group designation *church leaders*. In contrast to the *senior church officials*, they were not always active at the highest levels of church administration and derived their position to an important degree from participation in societies. As demonstrated, the societies were close to the church and attracted theologians who often involved in church administration. In addition, a number of theologians who left the academy to serve in a position in church administration were quite active in associations like the *Kirchentag* or the *Conferenz für innere Mission*.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to demonstrate the benefits of a network-based approach for writing the history of academic theology. After an introduction to the paradigm and major methods of social network analysis, the cases of church administration and societies were studied. While church administration retained its

traditional, state-based outlook, societies attempted to form a network which extended throughout the whole of Germany. Although the lion's share of the visitors was generally from the region in which the society convened, the societies contributed to the formation of a national theological elite by attracting leading individuals from other regions.

This elite was the subject of the final section, which presented a proposal for a ‹contempory canon› of academic theology. To an important degree, this canon reflects the conditions of theology and religion in the periods studied. There was hardly a national elite in the period 1820-1842. The network approach, however, uncovers theologians who successfully crossed their local boundaries or who were in the position to play a mediating role. After 1843, associations and journals contributed to the formation of a national elite. This development went accompanied by the crystallisation of a hegemony of a Prussian-based unionism and the construction of competing discourses in the conservative and liberal camp.

Finally, the rise of new forms of community stimulated the differentiation of the concept of theological scholarship. This was partly a process of professionalisation, since early career scholars increasingly tried to distinguish themselves by publishing in journals. At the same time, more professors left the academy for service in church administration (instead of combining both domains). Church administrators, both in and outside the university, formed an important constituent of the societies and, in this way, found new channels for communicating with society.
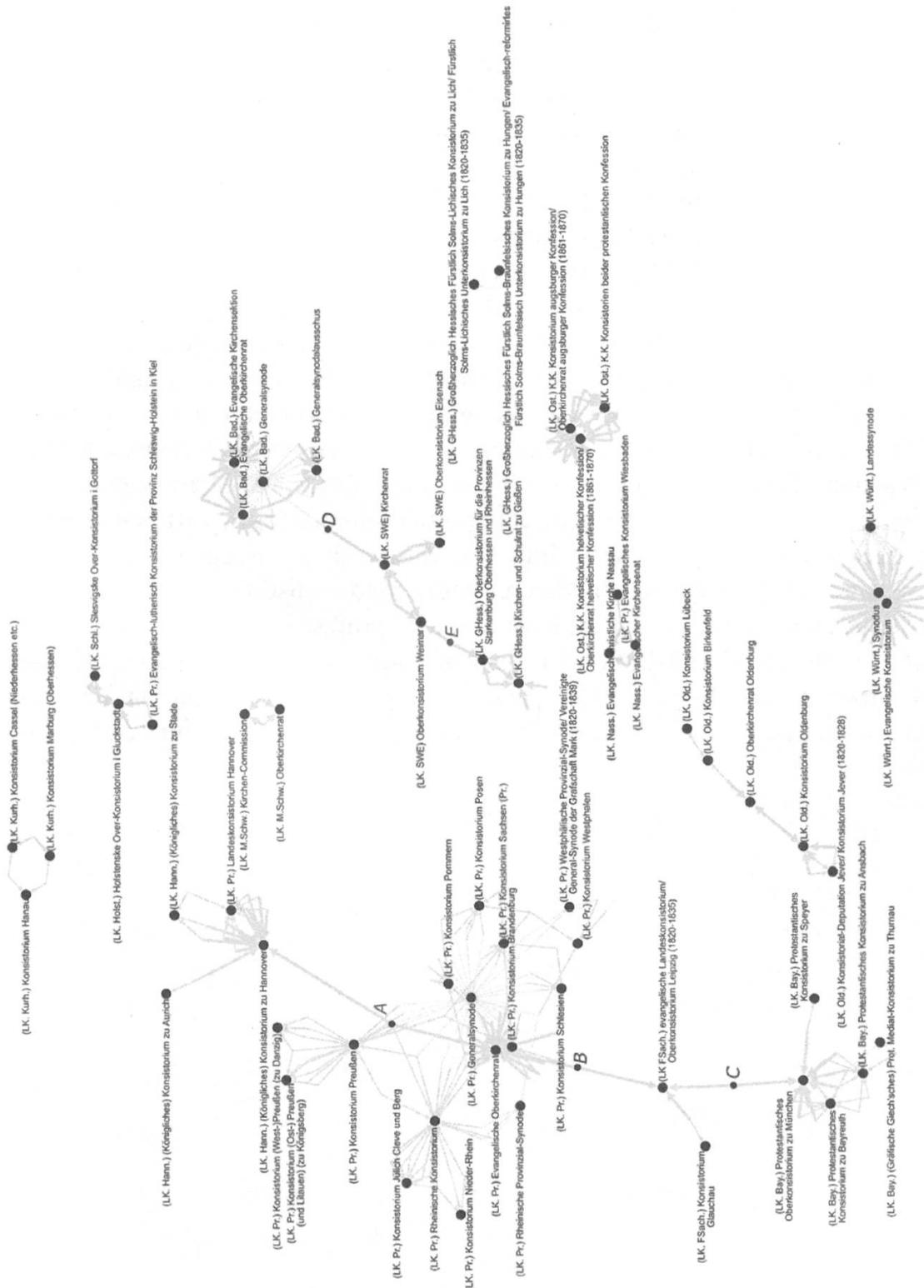
Figure 1: Network of ecclesial authorities (1820–1870). In the visualisation institutions are visible, individual persons are only visible as connections. Letters indicate officials which were active in more than one state church: A – Isaac August Dorner, B – Benno Bruno Brückner, C – Gottlieb Adolph von Harleß, D – Theophor Wilhelm Dittenberger and E – Johann Friedrich Heinrich Schwabe. Organisations with no connection to another organisation were deleted manually. Other settings: dynamic range: 1820–1870, degree range >2, algorithms: Yifan hu proportional (standard settings)/ contraction/ label adjust.
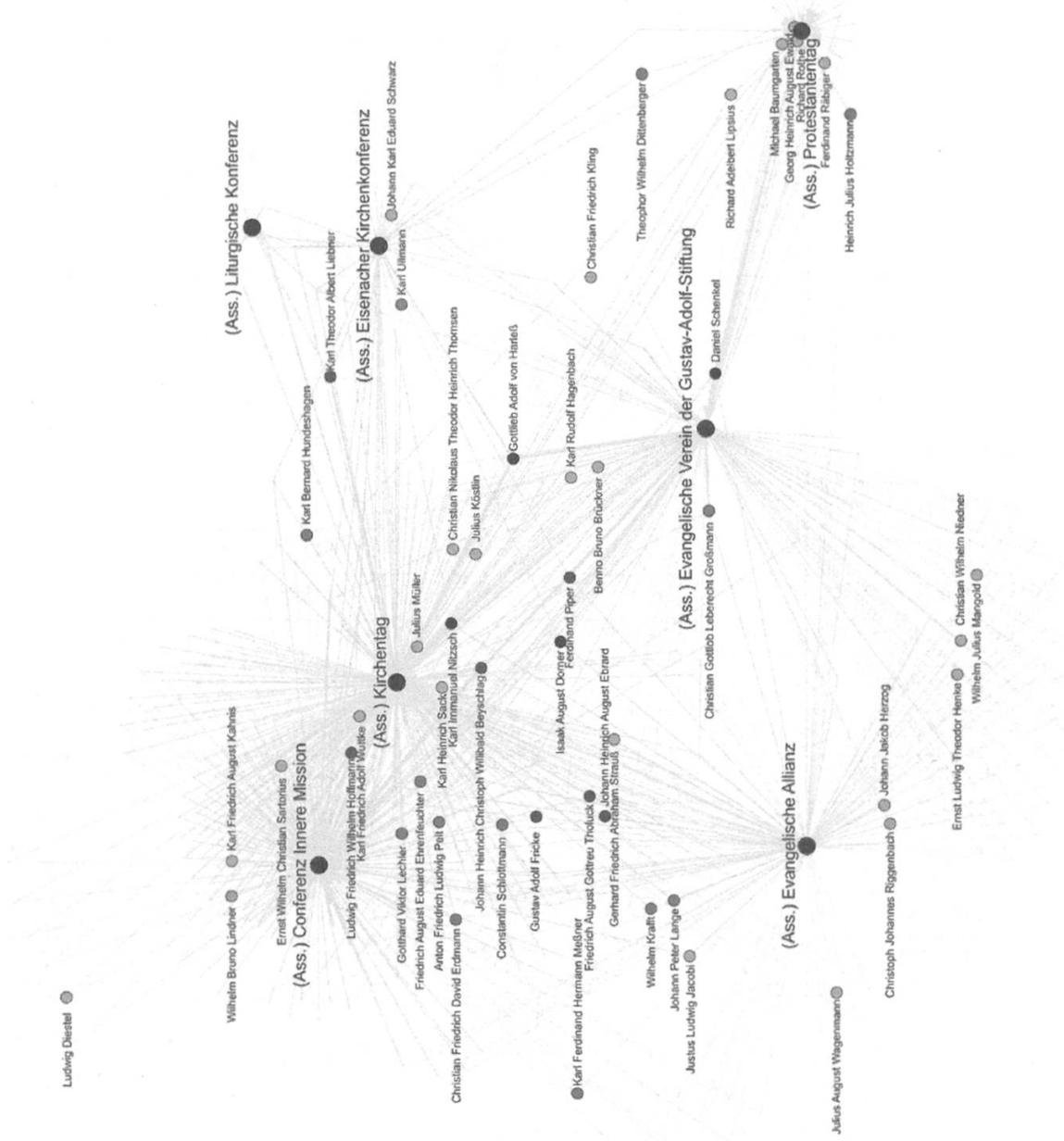
Figure 2: Network of associations (1843–1870). In large script, organisations are indicated. Individuals with one connection are left out. Only academic theologians are labelled and have a visible node. The hue of grey of the nodes indicating individuals gives an impression of the number of connections, ranging from two to five connections. Other settings: dynamic range: 1843–1870, degree range >2, algorithm: ForceAtlas2.

Name	Position	Birth year	Locations	Church	Journal
Augusti, Johann Christian Wilhelm	1,3,-	1772	Jena, Breslau, Bonn	✓	✓
Baur, Ferdinand Christian	2,-,6	1792	Tübingen		✓
Bindemann, Karl Wilhelm Johann	(-,-,7)	1814	Greifswald		✓
Bleek, Friedrich	2,-,11	1793	Berlin, Bonn		✓
Böhmer, Wilhelm	2,18,-	1800	Halle, Greifswald, Breslau		
Credner, Karl August	1,-,1	1797	Jena, Gießen		✓
Daub, Karl	2,4,17	1765	Heidelberg	✓	✓
Dieffenbach, Ludwig Adam	(-,11,-)	1772	Gießen	✓	
Dorner, Isaak August	2,-,-	1809	Tübingen, Kiel	✓	✓
Engelhardt, Johann Georg Veit	2,9,5	1791	Erlangen		✓
Fleck, Ferdinand Florens	(-,16,-)	1800	Leipzig		✓
Fleischer, Heinrich Leberecht	2,-,-	1801	Leipzig		✓
Gaß, Johann Christian	2,-,-	1766	Breslau	✓	✓
Gieseler, Johann Karl Ludwig	2,-,12	1792	Bonn, Göttingen		✓
Grimm, Karl Ludwig Willibald	2,-,4	1807	Jena		✓
Hahn, August Heinrich	1,20,-	1792	Königsberg, Breslau	✓	
Hartmann, Anton Theodor	2,-,-	1774	Rostock	✓	✓
Hofmann, Johann Christian Conrad von	2,10,1	1810	Erlangen, Rostock		
Kähler, Ludwig August	2,-,-	1775	Königsberg	✓	
Kling, Christian Friedrich	2,-,15	1800	Marburg, Bonn		✓
Knobel, August Wilhelm	2,17,19	1807	Breslau, Gießen		✓
Köster, Johann Friedrich Burchard	2,-,-	1791	Kiel	✓	✓
Lange, Johann Lobegott Ferdinand	1,15,3	1798	Jena		✓
Lücke, Gottfried Christian Friedrich	1,19,10	1791	Bonn, Göttingen	✓	✓
Middeldorpf, Heinrich	2,-,-	1788	Breslau	✓	✓
Müller, Julius	1,-,9	1801	Göttingen, Marburg, Halle		✓
Olshausen, Hermann	2,1,20	1796	Königsberg, Erlangen		✓
Palmer, Karl Christian	(-,12,-)	1759	Gießen	✓	

Name	Position	Birth year	Locations	Church	Journal
Ranke, Friedrich Heinrich	2,10,-	1798	Erlangen	✓	
Redepenning, Ernst Rudolf	2,-,13	1810	Bonn, Göttingen		✓
Rettberg, Friedrich Wilhelm	1,6,2	1805	Marburg, Göttingen		✓
Rhesa, Ludwig Jedemin	2,-,-	1777	Königsberg	✓	
Sartorius, Ernst Wilhelm Christian	2,8,-	1797	Marburg, Dorpat	✓	
Schmidt, Johann Ernst Christian	(-,13,-)	1772	Gießen	✓	
Schulz, David	1,14,-	1779	Breslau	✓	✓
Schwarz, Friedrich Heinrich Christian	2,5,18	1766	Heidelberg	✓	✓
Stickel, Johann Gustav	2,-,-	1805	Jena		✓
Tholuck, Friedrich August Gottreu	2,17,14	1799	Berlin, Halle		✓
Tischendorf, Lobegott Friedrich Constantin	(-,-,8)	1815	Leipzig		✓
Tittmann, Johann August Heinrich	2,-,-	1773	Leipzig	✓	✓
Ullmann, Karl	2,-,16	1796	Halle, Heidelberg		✓
Wiggers, Gustav Adam Friedrich	2,-,-	1777	Rostock	✓	✓
Wiggers, Julius	2,-,-	1811	Rostock		✓

Table 1: Alphabetical list of prominent theologians between 1820 and 1842. Indicated are prominence (measured by three statistical calculations (weighted outdegree, betweenness and eigenvector/prestige)). The numbers indicate the position of this person in the different measurements. In addition, the universities at which the theologian had a formal appointment ((außerordentl.) Professor) during this period are indicated and his activity in the two other types of institutions (church administration, journals).

Name	Position	Birth year	Locations	Church	Association	Journal
Beyschlag, Johann Heinrich Christoph Willibald	-,-,5	1823	Halle		✓	✓
Delitzsch, Franz Julius	(-,18,-)	1813	Leipzig, Rostock, Erlangen		✓	✓
Diestel, Ludwig	4,9,17	1825	Bonn, Greifswald, Jena		✓	✓
Dorner, Isaak August	1,1,1	1809	Kiel, Königsberg, Bonn, Göttingen, Berlin	✓	✓	✓
Ebrard, Johann Heinrich August	5,-,6	1818	Zürich, Erlangen		✓	✓
Ehrenfeuchter, Friedrich August Eduard	5,4,9	1814	Göttingen	✓	✓	✓
Erdmann, Christian Friedrich David	5,16,14	1821	Königsberg, Breslau	✓	✓	✓
Fricke, Gustav Adolf	-,-,10	1822	Leipzig, Kiel		✓	
Harleß, Gottlieb Adolf von	(-,6,-)	1806	Erlangen, Leipzig	✓	✓	
Herzog, Johann Jakob	5,20,-	1805	Lausanne, Halle, Erlangen		✓	✓
Hoffmann, Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm	4,-,18	1806	Basel, Tübingen	✓	✓	✓
Holtzmann, Heinrich Julius	5,13,-	1832	Heidelberg	✓	✓	✓
Hundeshagen, Karl Bernard	4,5,7	1810	Bern, Heidelberg, Bonn		✓	✓
Köstlin, Julius	4,10,15	1826	Göttingen, Breslau, Halle	✓	✓	✓
Lange, Johann Peter	5,-,12	1802	Zürich, Bonn	✓	✓	✓
Lechler, Gotthard Viktor	-,-,8	1811	Leipzig	✓	✓	✓
Liebner, Karl Theodor Albert	3,15,16	1806	Kiel, Leipzig	✓	✓	✓
Lipsius, Richard Adelbert	4,12,-	1830	Leipzig, Wien, Kiel		✓	✓
Nitzsch, Karl Immanuel	2,3,2	1787	Bonn	✓	✓	✓
Pelt, Anton Friedrich Ludwig	(-,-,11)	1799	Kiel		✓	✓
Piper, Ferdinand	4,8,-	1811	Berlin		✓	✓
Ranke, Friedrich Heinrich	-,17,-	1798	Erlangen	✓	✓	
Sack, Karl Heinrich	3,14,20	1789	Bonn	✓	✓	✓
Schenkel, Daniel	3,2,3	1813	Basel, Heidelberg	✓	✓	✓
Schlottmann, Constantin	5,-,13	1819	Zürich, Bonn, Halle		✓	✓
Schwarz, Johann Karl Eduard	-,11,-	1802	Jena	✓	✓	✓
Tholuck, Friedrich August Gottreu	5,19,4	1799	Berlin, Halle	✓	✓	✓
Ullmann, Karl	5,7,19	1796	Halle, Heidelberg	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Alphabetical list of prominent theologians between 1843 and 1870. Indicated are prominence (measured by three statistical calculations (weighted outdegree, betweenness and eigenvector/prestige)). The numbers indicate the position of this person in the different measurements. In addition, the universities at which the theologian had a formal appointment ((außerordentl.) Professor) during this period are indicated and his activity in the three other types of institutions (church administration, associations, journals).

Towards a Contextual Canon of Theology – A Network-based Approach to German Academic Theology (1820–1870)

In the field of historical theology, reception at a later stage is often the principal criterion for establishing prominence. This article demonstrates that the different tools in Social Network Analysis provide a comprehensive view of the theological landscape which can include the different contextual factors and developments. After an introduction to the methodology applied, the article explores the relevance of institutions of church administration and societies for the theological landscape in the mid-nineteenth century. It argues that, against the background of a persistently state-based landscape of church administration, the associations forged something like a national stage for academic theologians. The article concludes with an attempt to establish a network-based canon for theology for the periods 1820–1842 and 1843–1870. Finally, the implications of this canon on individual and institutional levels are discussed critically.

Social Network Analysis – Visualisation – Academic Theology – Church Administration – Societies – Canon of Theology – History of Theology.

Auf dem Weg zu einem kontextuellen Kanon der Theologie – eine netzwerkbasierte Annäherung an die deutsche akademische Theologie (1820–1870)

Im Bereich der historischen Theologie ist die spätere Rezeption oft das Hauptkriterium für die Feststellung von Prominenz. Dieser Aufsatz zeigt, dass die verschiedenen Werkzeuge der Sozialen Netzwerkanalyse einen umfassenden Blick auf die theologische Landschaft ermöglichen, der die verschiedenen Kontextfaktoren und Entwicklungen einbeziehen kann. Nach einer Einführung in die angewandte Methodik wird die Bedeutung von Institutionen der Kirchenverwaltung und von Verbänden für die theologische Landschaft in der Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts untersucht. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Vereine vor dem Hintergrund einer weiterhin staatlich geprägten Kirchenverwaltungslandschaft so etwas wie eine nationale Bühne für akademische Theologen schufen. Der Artikel schliesst mit dem Versuch, einen netzwerkbasierten Kanon der Theologie für die Zeiträume 1820–1842 und 1843–1870 zu erstellen. Abschliessend werden die Implikationen dieses Kanons auf individueller und institutioneller Ebene kritisch diskutiert.

Soziale Netzwerkanalyse – Visualisierung – Akademische Theologie – Kirchenverwaltung – Gesellschaften – Kanon der Theologie – Theologiegeschichte.

Vers un canon contextuel de la théologie – Une analyse de réseaux de la théologie académique allemande (1820–1870)

Dans le domaine de la théologie historique, la réception ultérieure est souvent le principal critère pour établir l'importance d'un ouvrage. Cet essai démontre que les différents outils de l'analyse des réseaux sociaux permettent d'obtenir une vue d'ensemble du paysage théologique qui peut inclure les différents facteurs et développements contextuels. Après une présentation de la méthodologie appliquée, l'essai explore la pertinence des institutions de l'administration ecclésiastique et des associations pour le paysage théologique au milieu du dix-neuvième siècle. Il soutient que, dans le contexte d'une administration ecclésiastique toujours basée sur l'État, les associations ont forgé une sorte de scène nationale pour les théologiens universitaires. L'article se termine par une tentative d'établir un canon théologique basé sur le réseau pour les périodes 1820–1842 et 1843–1870. Enfin, les implications de ce canon au niveau individuel et institutionnel font l'objet d'une discussion critique.

Analyse des réseaux sociaux – visualisation – théologie académique – administration des Églises – sociétés – canon de la théologie – histoire de la théologie.

Verso un canone contestuale di teologia – un approccio basato sulle reti sociali alla teologia accademica tedesca (1820–1870)

Nel campo della teologia storica, la ricezione in un secondo momento è spesso il criterio principale per stabilire l'importanza. Questo saggio dimostra che i diversi strumenti dell'analisi delle reti sociali forniscono una visione completa del panorama teologico che può includere i diversi fattori e sviluppi contestuali. Dopo un'introduzione alla metodologia applicata, l'articolo esplora la rilevanza delle istituzioni dell'amministrazione ecclesiastica e delle associazioni per il panorama teologico della metà del XIX secolo. Si sostiene che, sullo sfondo di un panorama di amministrazione ecclesiastica persistentemente statale, le associazioni crearono una sorta di palcoscenico nazionale per i teologi accademici. L'articolo si conclude con un tentativo di stabilire un canone basato sulle reti sociali per la teologia nei periodi 1820–1842 e 1843–1870. Infine, vengono discusse criticamente le implicazioni di questo canone a livello individuale e istituzionale.

Analisi delle reti sociali – visualizzazione – teologia accademica – amministrazione della Chiesa – società – canone di teologia – storia della teologia.

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