

Call for papers

Interdisciplinary Workshop: “Possibilities and Limitations of Socio-Religious Community and Identity Formation in the 18th and 19th Century Moravian Church”

July 27–28, 2023, University of Hamburg (Germany)

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Moravian Church set itself apart from both confessional churches and other pietist movements by the strong sense of collective identity it fostered among its members. Moravian identity was shaped and maintained through an all-encompassing church and social structure which regulated many areas of life – family and work, cultural activity and piety. During the years of increasing missionary activity and worldwide expansion, church leadership increasingly unified and controlled these forms of religious, cultural and social community formation. Although researchers from different disciplines have already studied this phenomenon, they have rarely explored how viable the ideal of a universal Moravian identity, untouched by competing ethnic or cultural ties, was in the face of extensive exchange with the wider world. Global missionary endeavour, the expansion of Moravian settlements and artistic projects all required the transfer of ideas, aesthetics and people across continents. In the 19th century, the idea of a homogeneous church structure was challenged by nation building and the rise of national churches.

The interdisciplinary workshop will explore both the possibilities and limitations of a collective Moravian understanding of community in different social, institutional and cultural contexts. How deeply rooted and how extensive was the Moravian collective identity? How was it created, maintained, and secured? How did Moravian communities provide space for individual development? How did ties to other institutions and competing sets of values interfere with Moravian community formation? Questions such as these can productively be explored through media such as music, literature (including personal writing) and art, which shaped Moravian identity and everyday life but also had the potential of becoming *individual* artistic expressions.

Our workshop welcomes contributions from disciplines of the humanities (history, literary studies, musicology, and art history) as well as religious studies and theology. Papers from other fields, such as pedagogy or history of architecture, are likewise welcome. Contributions may study the Moravian Church as a whole or focus on a single settlement, community or member in their respective regional, national and international contexts. Comparisons – for example to other religious movements of the 18th and 19th centuries – are also of interest.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- the operations of the Moravian Church in different geographical, political, and confessional context between immutability and adaption
- implementing Moravian ideals and ways of life in the mission field

- family and religious community as competing institutions
- intercultural and -confessional exchange in Moravian schools
- Moravian music and art as a product and expression of religious norms, external influences and aesthetic self-exploration
- literary writing (poetry, diaries, letters) as an expression of collective identity or individual piety
- economic activity in service of the community and independent business

Please direct an abstract of no more than 300 words for a paper of 25 minutes as well as a short biography to maryam.haiawi@uni-hamburg.de and maximilian.rose@uni-hamburg.de by August 31, 2022. We have a limited budget to cover travel and accommodation expenses.