

How to Align Medieval Prose Texts and Other Impossibilities

Thursday, 5 March 2026 14:00 (30 minutes)

The lecture takes its starting point from a concrete practical example, namely the planned digital edition of “Der Heiligen Leben, Redaktion”, a late medieval collection of legends about saints. This collection exists in two different text versions, created in quick succession, whose differences are relevant for the cultural-historical context of the legends. Since the texts are in prose, it is difficult to create a synopsis, especially since the changes go beyond minor differences on the surface of the text and in some cases are merely semantically comparable paraphrases. The application of classical collation methods (such as Levenshtein distance) is not sufficient here; instead, embedding-based approaches are recommended. The presentation explores the applicability of different models and ultimately determines the extent to which a completely LLM-based approach can be used to address the alignment problem even more effectively.

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