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SO WHAT ARE WE REALLY TALKING ABOUT? A CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF KEYWORDS AND COLLOCATIONS IN THE »THEOLOGISCHE QUARTALSSCHRIFT«

When I first told others that I was studying Catholic Theology, especially in highly secularized contexts, one of the most common questions was: So, what do you do in that field? For those who grow up as Catholics and identify themselves as believers, this question almost never arises explicitly. However, for outsiders – whose number is increasing especially in Germany – Catholic Theology is becoming more and more a riddle wrapped up in an enigma. But to even begin a conversation with outsiders, one must be able to explain what Catholic Theology deals with, in order to then attempt to make understandable reasons why it is not entirely

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illogical to explore the nature of God and religious beliefs in an academic context.

How would *you* like the following explanation? Would *you* agree?

»Theology deals with God, Jesus Christ, the Church and the world throughout time and history, as well as the existential question of how this relates to humans and life.«

Or, in german:

»Theologie beschäftigt sich mit Gott, Jesus Christus, der Kirche und der Welt in Zeit und Geschichte, und der existenziellen Frage, wie dies mit den Menschen und dem Leben zusammenhängt.«

The divergence of this description from existing norms and its potential lack of familiarity are to be expected, as it is not a commonly established and accepted definition, but rather one based on the findings of corpus linguistic analysis. By analyzing 81 volumes (1925–2006, as no issues were published in 1945 due to World War II) of one of the most well-known German journals on Theology, this article aims to identify what »we« – as in *theologians* from *Germany* – really talk or write about, using the tools of corpus linguistics.

Published in Tübingen since 1819, the »Theologische Quartalsschrift« reached its 203rd volume in 2023. The concrete texts published in this journal provide objective insights on the actual topics of Catholic Theology in an academic context in the German language. This approach offers a significant advantage: it provides a valid database, free from the biases of personal themes, perspectives, or blind spots. Additionally, through the translation of keywords, it allows non-German-speaking theologians to gain insight into the topics that German theology has been dealing with over the past decades.

Corpus Linguistic Analysis

In recent years, there have been increasing attempts to apply corpus linguistics in the field of theology. *Altmeyer*, for example, analyzes “the language use of German RE-students writing texts about God” (Altmeyer 2015) and showcases several possibilities of corpus linguistic analysis by utilizing the online lexicon for religious education, WiReLex, as a corpus (Altmeyer 2019). However, he also notes, „[d]ie Anwendung korpusanalytischer Verfahren hat in der empirisch-religionspädagogischen Forschung bislang noch wenig Verbreitung gefunden“ (Altmeyer 2019,

the application of corpus analytic methods has not been frequently utilized in empirical religious-educational research thus far).

Outside of religious education, there have been recent publications exploring the potential of these methods in other theological disciplines. Typically, these studies focus on individual terms and topics, analyzing them based on selected textual sources (Heilmann 2022, Muhammad 2022, Warnke & Wilk 2022). In contrast, the present approach takes a macro perspective to trace and elucidate underlying trends.

There is an optimistic outlook that large-scale digitization projects, such as the Tübingen DFG project *DigiTheo_5*, will soon overcome significant obstacles regarding the digital availability of theological text corpora and enable further, more extensive, and detailed studies. However, these endeavors often require computational power that is rarely available in theological faculties and institutes.

Topics and contents within the ThQ

The examined corpus consists of 12,092,234 tokens.[2] In order to identify the treated topics, the entire corpus was first filtered, taking into consideration only nouns. The twelve most frequent nouns are:

Tokens			12,092,234
1	Kirche	*Church*	29,869
2	Theologie	*Theology*	21,286
3	Gott	*God*	18,775
4	Menschen	*Humans*	17,553
5	Gottes	*God's*	15,848
6	Frage	*Question*	12,780
7	Zeit	*Time*	12,637
8	Geschichte	*History*	11,434
9	Christus	*Christ*	9,327
10	Welt	*World*	9,320
11	Leben	*Life*	8,807
12	Jesus	*Jesus*	7,711

Table 1: 12 most frequent nouns

2 Tokens are „Einheiten der Schriftsprache [...], die durch Leerzeichen oder Satzzeichen voneinander getrennt sind" (Scherer, 2014, 33); *units of written language that are separated by spaces or punctuation marks.*

If you try to answer the question, what »we« are really talking about, a first step could be to build a definition by only using these nouns. The sentence mentioned at the beginning, *»Theology deals with God, Jesus Christ, the Church and the world throughout time and history, as well as the existential question of how this relates to humans and life«,* is what I came up with, but there are certainly many – maybe far better – possibilities.

If you consider inflected forms, there is a slight shift, but not a major transformation in the results. A few less content-laden nouns such as »Art« and »Weise« (these two german words are often combined in the phrase »auf diese Art und Weise«, meaning something like *in this manner* or *in this way*), »Teil« (*part*, *component*, *share*, *section*, *piece*), »Seite« (*page*, *side*) and »Band« (*volume*, *band*), »Begriff« (*term*, *definition*, *concept*, *notion*), »Zusammenhang« (*context*, *correlation*, *connection*), »Verhältnis« (*proportion*, *rate*, *relation*, *ratio*) and »Darstellung« (*presentation*, *display*, *depiction*) or shortenings such as »Anm.« (»Anmerkung«, *note*) or »Hrsg.« (»Herausgeber«, *editor*) were omitted.

The following table contains the eighty most frequently used nouns according to their base form in the nominative singular. There could be an argument about whether some of these should be classified as less content-laden nouns, similar to the ones mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, the objective of this survey is not to engage in a discussion about individual nouns, but rather to portray general topics in order to provide transparency regarding the actual focus of the respective authors.

	Grundform (Nom. Sg.)	*Translation/ Meaning*	Total/ Gesamt	Token	Quantity/ Anzahl
1	Gott	*God*	34,623	Gott	18,775
				Gottes	15,848
2	Kirche	*Church*	32,972	Kirche	29,869
				Kirchen	3,103
3	Mensch	*Human*	23,940	Menschen	17,553
				Mensch	6,387
4	Theologie	*Theology*	21,286	Theologie	21,286
5	Frage	*Question*	18,115	Frage	12,780
				Fragen	5,335
6	Christus	*Christ*	16,882	Christus	9,327
				Christi	7,555

7	Jesus	*Jesus*	15,110	Jesus	7,711
				Jesu	7,399
8	Glaube	*Faith/Belief*	14,160	Glauben	5,343
				Glaubens	4,711
				Glaube	4,106
9	Zeit	*Time*	13,920	Zeit	12,637
				Zeiten	1,283
10	Leben	*Life*	12,600	Leben	8,807
				Lebens	3,793
11	Geschichte	*History*	11,434	Geschichte	11,434
12	Schrift	*Scripture*	9,582	Schrift	6,085
				Schriften	3,497
13	Welt	*World*	9,320	Welt	9,320
14	Wort	*World*	9,187	Wort	7,528
				Wortes	1,659
15	Text	*Text*	8,707	Text	4,595
				Texte	2,960
				Textes	1,152
16	Bischof	*Bishop*	8,287	Bischof	3,912
				Bischöfe	2,492
				Bischofs	1,257
				Bischöfen	626
17	Geist	*Spirit*	8,272	Geist	5,798
				Geistes	2,474
18	Recht	*Law/Right*	8,117	Recht	6,286
				Rechte	960
				Rechts	871
19	Buch	*Book*	7,710	Buch	5,001
				Buches	1,601
				Bücher	1,108
20	Lehre	*Doctrine/ Teaching*	6,914	Lehre	6,129
				Lehren	785
21	Werk	*Work*	6,865	Werk	5,528
				Werkes	1,337

22	Sinn	*Meaning*	6,729	Sinn	6,729
23	Arbeit	*Labor/Work*	6,652	Arbeit	5,032
				Arbeiten	1,620
24	Testament	*Testament*	6,216	Testament	4,222
				Testaments	1,377
				Testamentes	617
25	Konzil	*Council*	5,973	Konzil	3,536
				Konzils	1,876
				Konzilien	561
26	Philosophie	*Philosophy*	5,845	Philosophie	5,845
27	Religion	*Religion*	5,534	Religion	5,534
28	Denken	*Thinking*	5,519	Denken	3,756
				Denkens	1,763
29	Tradition	*Tradition*	5,343	Tradition	4,642
				Traditionen	701
30	Wahrheit	*Truth*	5,247	Wahrheit	5,247
31	Einheit	*Unity*	5,239	Einheit	5,239
32	Christentum	*Christianity*	5,195	Christentum	3,048
				Christentums	2,147
33	Theologe	*Theologian*	5,141	Theologen	3,977
				Theologe	1,164
34	Freiheit	*Freedom*	5,127	Freiheit	5,127
35	Christ	*Christian*	4,977	Christen	3,697
				Christ	1,280
36	Verfasser	*Author*	4,930	Verfasser	4,930
37	Liebe	*Love*	4,749	Liebe	4,749
38	Wesen	*Essence*	4,697	Wesen	4,144
				Wesens	553
39	Sinne	*Senses*	4,625	Sinne	4,625
40	Frau	*Woman/Wife/ Mrs./Lady*	4,547	Frau	2,747
				Frauen	1,800
41	Entwicklung	*Development*	4,533	Entwicklung	4,533

42	Gesetz	*Law/Bill*	4,509	Gesetz	2,869
				Gesetze	843
				Gesetzes	797
43	Person	*Person*	4,446	Person	2,927
				Personen	1,519
44	Israel	*Israel*	4,296	Israel	2,740
				Israels	1,556
45	Herr	*Lord/Mr./Master*	4,280	Herrn	2,542
				Herr	1,520
				Herren	218
46	Gedanke	*Thought*	4,270	Gedanken	2,866
				Gedanke	1,157
				Gedankens	247
47	Wissenschaft	*Science*	4,268	Wissenschaft	3,338
				Wissenschaften	930
48	Papst	*Pope*	4,258	Papst	3,046
				Papstes	1,212
49	Weg	*Way*	4,190	Weg	4,028
				Weges	162
50	Volk	*People/Nation*	4,082	Volk	2,563
				Volkes	1,254
				Volke	265
51	Gemeinde	*Congregation/ Fold/Parish/ Community*	4,039	Gemeinde	2,998
				Gemeinden	1,041
52	Ehe	*Matrimony*	3,928	Ehe	3,928
53	Natur	*Natur*	3,826	Natur	3,826
54	Name	*Name*	3,798	Namen	2,821
				Name	757
				Namens	220
55	Fakultät	*Faculty/ Department*	3,796	Fakultät	2,768
				Fakultäten	1,028
56	Offenbarung	*Revelation*	3,793	Offenbarung	3,793
57	Gegenwart	*Present*	3,714	Gegenwart	3,714

58	Erfahrung	*Experience*	3,694	Erfahrung	2,566
				Erfahrungen	1,128
59	Sprache	*Language*	3,692	Sprache	3,692
60	Vater	*Father*	3,598	Vater	2,834
				Vaters	764
61	Staat	*State*	3,562	Staat	2,934
				Staates	628
62	Wirklichkeit	*Reality*	3,548	Wirklichkeit	3,548
63	Sünde	*Sin*	3,475	Sünde	2,748
				Sünden	727
64	Gnade	*Grace*	3,434	Gnade	3,434
65	Sakrament	*Sacrament*	3,396	Sakrament	1,653
				Sakramente	959
				Sakramenten	307
				Sakramentes	288
				Sakraments	189
66	Tod	*Death*	3,281	Tod	2,699
				Todes	582
67	Literatur	*Literature*	3,141	Literatur	3,141
68	Gesellschaft	*Society*	3,076	Gesellschaft	3,076
69	Universität	*University*	2,992	Universität	2,992
70	Priester	*Priest*	2,978	Priester	2,365
				Priestern	348
				Priesters	265
71	Kritik	*Criticism/Review*	2,938	Kritik	2,938
72	Sohn	*Son*	2,909	Sohn	2,345
				Sohnes	564
73	Schule	*School*	2,901	Schule	2,310
				Schulen	591
74	Gemeinschaft	*Community*	2,840	Gemeinschaft	2,840
75	Kraft	*Power*	2,839	Kraft	2,839
76	Seele	*Soul*	2,733	Seele	2,733
77	Vernunft	*Reason*	2,656	Vernunft	2,656

78	Gestalt	*Shape/Form/ Figure*	2,606	Gestalt	2,606
79	Bibel	*Bible*	2,457	Bibel	2,457
80	Verkündigung	*Annunciation/ Proclamation*	2,431	Verkündigung	2,431

Table 2: 80 most frequent nouns, based

Observations

Firstly, it is important to provide an explanation at this point: Even in its simplest form, corpus *linguistics* yields robust results by analyzing occurrences and frequencies and presenting them in numerical values. The task of corpus *linguists* is then to interpret these results.

In light of this, each individual will perceive different aspects, and each person will discover elements that are expected and anticipated as well as peculiar, intriguing, or noteworthy. Consequently, this analysis has to start by articulating the most evident observation: Corpus linguistic methods facilitate the objective and transparent examination of enduring themes in scientific theology, specifically through the analysis of noun usage. This approach fosters evidence-based discussions and enables to concentrate on distinctive characteristics and particularities.

At first glance, it becomes evident that theological debates significantly differ from everyday vocabulary. Further investigations, which cannot be undertaken within the scope of this brief overview, would confirm that even commonly used nouns, such as »Herr« (Lord), undergo a distinct shift in meaning within the theological context. These findings also give rise to critical self-reflection: Is it possible that academic theology, at times, becomes self-referential, possibly losing sight of its actual content?

Particularities

Before delving into the nouns included in the list, it may be beneficial to take an initial step in the opposite direction: considering which supposedly expected terms are noticeably absent from the list. Three examples that come to mind are *prayer* (»Gebet«, 1,131 occurrences), *salvation* (»Erlösung«, 1,475 occurrences), and *creation* (»Schöpfung«, 1,827 occurrences). However, each reader will consider their specific field of work and may potentially miss other terms.

Given this, the frequency of other terms appears remarkably high. Nevertheless, various explanatory approaches can be outlined. Regarding the term »Konzil« (*council*), for instance, one should take into account the time span of the analyzed writings: 1925–2006.

The recurring use of the term »Einheit« (*unity*) can be explained by its polyvalence, considering that theology encompasses discussions of the indissoluble unity of the Trinity, the unity of the Church, and additional facets. A more detailed and comprehensive research would be necessary to investigate which specific aspects of unity are being referred to.

Eventually, closer examination should be given to the 3,928 occurrences of »Ehe«. If understood as *matrimony*, it would be the only sacrament within the list of the eighty most frequently used nouns (with »Sakrament« itself ranking at 65th place). However, it is important to note that the case-sensitive evaluation method may occasionally include sentence beginnings where »Ehe« is not used as a noun but as part of phrases (e.g., *Ehe der Tag beginnt, with »ehe« meaning *before* or *prior*). Nonetheless, further results will also demonstrate that the matrimony is *the* most frequently discussed sacrament.

»CORPUS BASED« AND »CORPUS DRIVEN«

The approach used so far is called »corpus based«, meaning a „Perspektive, bei der mit bestimmten Kategorien und bestehenden Theorien das Korpus analysiert wird und das Interesse dann darin besteht, eine Hypothese zu testen." (Bubenhofer 2009, 100; *perspective in which the corpus is analyzed using specific categories and existing theories, and the interest lies in testing a hypothesis*). In this particular – and very simple – first step, the category has been topics, with the interest of breaking down the numbers of most common topics in the journal.

On the other hand, if one follows a pragmatic approach and creates new categories based on the data from the evidence material, this is referred to as »corpus driven«, a „Versuch, Strukturen in einem Korpus sichtbar zu machen, ohne die Suche schon zu Beginn mit der Definition bestimmter Suchbegriffe einzuschränken" (Bubenhofer 2009, 123, *attempt to make structures visible in a corpus without limiting the search at the beginning with the definition of specific search terms*).

POSSIBILITIES OF CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IN THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS

Example A: Names

One of these »corpus driven« categories has been names. Five given names were used so frequently that they would have qualified for inclusion in the aforementioned list. Based on these observations, the question arose as to which other

names are mentioned at all, whether as the first names of the active authors, within citations and citation chains, or as content itself. 32 names occur more than 1000 times.

1	Thomas	6,018	**17**	Peter	1,475
2	Paulus	5,055	**18**	Augustin	1,398
3	Johannes	3,478	**19**	Pius	1,385
4	Karl	3,134	**20**	Hermann	1,371
5	Franz	2,454	**21**	Wilhelm	1,365
6	Augustinus	2,273	**22**	Martin	1,300
7	Adam	2,057	**23**	Rudolf	1,279
8	Origenes	2,002	**24**	Friedrich	1,242
9	Petrus	1,965	**25**	Hans	1,235
10	Johann	1,829	**26**	Heinrich	1,228
11	Paul	1,781	**27**	Ernst*	1,172
12	Josef	1,775	**28**	Max	1,116
13	Maria	1,736	**29**	Georg	1,057
14	Arnold	1,714	**30**	August*	1,053
15	Walter	1,614	**31**	Albert	1,030
16	Joseph	1,592	**32**	Otto	1,010

Table 3: Names

It should be noted that »Israel«, as mentioned earlier, can also be understood as a given name. In contrast, the German given names »August« and »Ernst« can also function as nouns, with »August« referring to the month (as it is in English), and »Ernst« as *seriousness* or *earnestness*. Some evidence for this interpretation of »Ernst« can be found through a collocation analysis of its most frequent immediate collocates. Collocations occur when there are „zwei oder mehrere Wörter überdurchschnittlich oft benachtbart“ (Scherer, 2014, 47; *two or more words are commonly found together*).

However, it is undeniable that both the content and citation chains are predominantly male-dominated, as there is only one female name present, and it comes as no surprise: Maria, which can also be used as a male (secondary) given name.

These findings have prompted further analyses – after all, it is interesting to determine which specific »Thomas«, for example, is being referred to. It can be demonstrated that the name »Thomas« typically appears as the three-word combina-

tion »Thomas von Aquin« (1,241 occurrences), indicating the significant presence of this Church teacher in academic theology. Furthermore, word combinations that can be described as collocations are also found with »Karl Rahner« (508), »Walter Kasper« (424), »Franz Xaver« (416) – and »Pius XII« (386). Only the names of two professors from Tübingen, »Rudolf Reinhardt« (593) and »Max Seckler« (543), occur more frequently, with the latter also due to his role within the editorial board of the journal.

Example B: Old or New Testament?

With just 2,457 occurrences within the 12,092,234 analyzed tokens, the *Bible* barely made it onto the list of the eighty most frequently used nouns. To determine which components of the Holy Scriptures are actually referred to, one could conduct an analysis of biblical references and their distribution. This would involve building a database of the corresponding abbreviations used and examining the corpus accordingly. Such an analysis could yield detailed results and provide insights into which parts of the canon have been comparatively neglected in recent decades.

However, a simpler and more straightforward approach is to analyze the collocations of the token »Testament«. This analysis reveals a noticeable emphasis on the New Testament in the analyzed contributions. Including various inflected forms, the collocation *New Testament* occurs more frequently (2,802 occurrences) than *Old Testament* (2,001 occurrences).

Example C: Council

As mentioned before, the token *council* appears quite frequently in the corpus. This raises the question of which councils are actually being referred to. The analysis of the most common three-word combinations where »Konzil« is at the end primarily points to the Second Vatican Council, as expected given the time span of the publications, while the Council of Trent is also frequently discussed.

When examining the most common three-word combinations where »Konzil« is at the beginning, the prominence of the Council of Trent is confirmed. Additionally, there are numerous discussions about the councils of Chalcedon/Chalkedon, Florence/Basel, Nicaea, Constantinople, Constance, and Ephesus. Such an analysis could uncover previously overlooked areas in the study of church history.

Example D: Sacraments

The fundamental aim of all these endeavors is to highlight corpus linguistic analysis as a tool that can be used to evaluate existing texts in a criteria-driven manner. In addition to providing insights into content-related statements, such an

approach allows for counterbalancing identified tendencies and imbalances, especially when certain topics receive excessive weight while others are rarely mentioned at all. In this context, it should also be noted that such distributions, word frequencies, and collocations could be analyzed based on years to chronologize the trends and specify the results more precisely.

To further illustrate this, let us consider one final example. As mentioned above, the analysis of the most frequently used nouns revealed only one sacrament, which is matrimony. Driven by this observation (»corpus driven«), the question arises about the treatment of other sacraments. Which sacraments were frequently discussed in the contributions of the »Theologischen Quartalsschrift«, and which ones were scarcely mentioned? All tokens with identifiable components that were attested more than 20 times were considered.

Overall, it can be demonstrated that two sacraments are more or less neglected: Confirmation and Anointing of the Sick. Even when taking inflected forms into account, both are found fewer than 400 times in the entire corpus. On the other hand, discussions on Holy Orders are encountered somewhat more frequently (1245 occurrences), followed by the Sacraments of Penance and Baptism.

Taufe/-n	*Baptism*	1770	Baptism	2236
Getaufte/-n	*Baptized*	204	Baptism	
Kinder-/Säuglingstaufe	*Infant baptism*	131	Baptism	
Täufling/-e	*Candidate for baptism*	53	Baptism	
Taufmesse	*Baptism Mass*	38	Baptism	
Erwachsenentaufe	*Adult baptism*	20	Baptism	
Taufritus	*Rite of Baptism*	20	Baptism	
Buße	*Penance*	825	Penance	2187
Versöhnung	*Reconciliation*	568	Penance	
Beicht/-e	*Confession*	337	Penance	
Beichtvater/-s	*Confessor/-,s*	201	Penance	
Bußsakrament/-(e)s	*Sacrament of Penance*	166	Penance	
Bußlehre	*Doctrine of Penance*	59	Penance	
Beichtstuhl	*Confessional*	31	Penance	

Table 4: Sacraments (Penance and Baptism)

The Sacrament of the Eucharist, despite the large number of words associated with it, is surprisingly not the most frequently addressed sacrament. Instead, it holds the position of the second most mentioned sacrament in this journal.

Eucharistie	*Eucharist*	1421	Eucharist	2843
Kommunion	*Communion*	339	Eucharist	
Eucharistielehre	*Doctrine of the Eucharist*	265	Eucharist	
Abendmahl	*Supper*	248	Eucharist	
Eucharistiefeier	*Eucharistic service / liturgy*	194	Eucharist	
Exkommunikation	*Excommunication*	133	Eucharist	
Herrenmahl	*Lord's Supper*	123	Eucharist	
Erstkommunion	*First Communion*	82	Eucharist	
Kommunionempfang	*Reception of Communion*	38	Eucharist	

Table 5: Sacraments (Eucharist)

With 58 different tokens specifically related to this sacrament, each occurring over 20 times, the Sacrament of Matrimony emerges as the undisputed front-runner in this regard, as mentioned above. In total, 8,179 out of the 12,092,234 analyzed tokens can be attributed to this sacrament. The wide array of words associated with it, which cannot be fully represented here, but is therefore made available online,[3] reveals a remarkable depth of discussion on matters of (canonical) disputes within the context of the examined eight decades of the »Theologische Quartalsschrift«.

Conclusion and prospect of further research

As demonstrated, computer-assisted methods of corpus linguistics offer substantial possibilities for gaining valuable insights within the field of scientific theology. Through several illustrative examples, it becomes evident that even with modest means, significant and surprising discoveries can be made from ancient texts and publications.

The task of more extensive studies at this point would be to further diversify the corpus and also consider chronological developments of specific term usage.

3 The results regarding the sacrament of matrimony can be viewed via https://t1p.de/43rj5.

For example, it could be examined whether academic theology is increasingly becoming more historical, thus losing sight of the pressing issues regarding a contemporary plausibility of faith. The existing results already support such a hypothesis, particularly when compared to the word frequencies presented above (e.g. *pluralism* – »Pluralismus«: 253; *atheism* – »Atheismus«: 226; *plurality* – »Pluralität«: 193; *empiricism* – »Empirie«: 107; *determinism* – »Determinismus«: 34; *globalization* – »Globalisierung«: 23; *climate catastrophe* – »Klimakatastrophe«: 1).

In summary, theology faces the challenge of upholding its linguistic and discursive competence. This can only be accomplished by avoiding self-referential circular reasoning and actively addressing any content gaps. Corpus linguistic analyses can serve as a tool to highlight and address these concerns.

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SO WHAT ARE WE REALLY TALKING ABOUT? A CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF KEYWORDS AND COLLOCATIONS IN THE »THEOLOGISCHE QUARTALSSCHRIFT«.

SUMMARY

This article presents a corpus linguistic analysis of the »Theologische Quartalsschrift«, a German journal on theology. The research identifies topics discussed in Catholic Theology by analyzing 81 volumes from 1925 to 2006 (excluding 1945). By filtering the corpus and focusing on nouns, frequent terms are identified, offering insights into central subjects.

The study enhances understanding of German Catholic Theology, providing transparency and objective insights in order to provide a clear explanation of Catholic Theology to outsiders, even in secularized contexts.

To insiders, this approach enables the discovery of blind spots and fosters discourse in scientific theology by making discussions explicit.

Overall, it demonstrates the usefulness of corpus linguistics in studying theological discourse and sheds light on the topics theologians engage with. The analysis contributes to a more informed and constructive dialogue within the field.

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