

Index religiosus

I begin my presentation with some general remarks.

DIA Electronic publications are documents that can only be consulted by means of a computer, tablet or gsm. These may be documents distributed free of charge or against payment. They take two forms: offline publications (fewer and fewer) and online publications. An offline publication is a document stored on an electronic medium: blu-ray, dvd, cd, magnetic tapes. An online publication is stored on a server accessible via a web browser like Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.

There are three different types of online electronic publications: 1) databases allowing the consultation of journal articles, dictionary records and monographs (e.g. DHGE online, Wiley online), 2) Internet sites (e.g. Foreign Missions of Paris) or 3) bibliographic databases: e.g. Index theologicus, Index religiosus, Atla. It is these that we will deal with today, particularly the Index religiosus, a product of the house.

Bibliographic databases collect a large number of bibliographic records by major research area. These generally fall into six main categories: journal articles, books, articles published in collective works, dictionary or encyclopaedia records, electronic resources (DVDs, websites), critical reviews. The books themselves can take many different forms: miscellany, conference proceedings, monograph, thesis, anthology, exhibition catalogue, bibliography catalogue, critical edition, dictionary, encyclopaedia or handbook, translation, collected essays, festschrift, fac-simile... Finally, some bibliographic databases also refer to more "exotic" content: papal documents, interviews, critical reviews of films, music, plays, etc.

Collections of electronic journals or monographs are now quite well indexed via the Google search engine. However, it is also essential to search via specialized interfaces, either those of content distributors or those of bibliographic databases, because Google is still far from finding all the available digital resources. ATLA religion database and the Index religiosus are therefore logically not indexed by Google or Google Scholar.

In the field of theology and religious sciences, three major bibliographic databases share the market: the American Theological Library Association (*ATLA religion database with Atla serials*), the *Index theologicus* and the *Index religiosus*. Each of these bases has its strengths and weaknesses, which we will discuss in more detail in a few minutes. These databases sometimes give too many results if the research is not sufficiently targeted and some researchers prefer to consult a specialized database directly. Thus Old or New Testament specialists gladly turn first in their research to the *Old Testament Abstracts* or *New Testament Abstracts*, a collaboration between ATLA, the Catholic Biblical Association and the Boston College.

DIA The Atla religion database is undoubtedly the best known of these three tools. Created in 1981 and based in Chicago (Illinois), first in paper format then distributed on cd-rom, it was launched on the Internet at the end of the 1990s. This database lists

scientific works in more than sixty languages on the world's major religions. This product is in constant evolution, its access is paying.

In November 2017, Atla merged the *ATLA Catholic Periodical and Literature Index*, a product specifically dedicated to Catholicism, into the *ATLA Religion Database*. As a result, approximately 500,000 records have been added to ATLA-RDB.

This database covers the following areas : Bible, archaeology and antiquities; human culture and society; world religions and religious studies; church history, missions, and ecumenism; pastoral ministry; theology, philosophy, and ethics.

Updated monthly in theory, it has more than **2,800,000** records in MARC format (used in most library catalogues). Atla religion database is accessible via Ebscohost research interface.

DIA The *Index theologicus* was created in 1995 by the library of the University of Tübingen and by the Catholic and Protestant theological faculties of the same university. First available on diskettes and then on CD-ROM, it has only been available on the Internet since 2002 via *Mohr-Siebeck Verlag*. You can search mainly on articles, monographs but also databases and websites, and even on photos, maps, software, microfilms, etc. Access to the Index is completely free of charge.

In *Index theologicus*, the fields of research cover the study of Christianity and the major religions in the broad sense (including studies in philosophy, psychology, history, social sciences). Whenever licenses allow, it is possible to access directly the full text of the articles, critical reviews and books concerned.

Updated monthly, it has more than **2,000,000** records.

DIA The *Index religiosus* was created in 2002 as computerized instrument, first under the name of *Bibliography of the RHE*. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Editor Brepols (Turnhout), we offer to subscribers an online bibliography that allows to consult all references published from 1970 to 2019. But the keywords have only been implemented since 2001 for the history of the Church and even more recently for theology. However, Brepols has automatically assigned a number of keywords on the basis of the former detailed classification of the two bibliographies. Since 2014, this bibliography of the RHE online is combined with the *Elenchus bibliographicus of the Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* under the name *Index Religiosus*.

The *Index religiosus* covers literature broadly speaking dealing with Church history (from Antiquity to present time) and with all theological matters: Canon law, biblical studies, liturgy, pastoral theology, spirituality, study of religions, systematic theology, and ethics. The *Index religiosus* is updated every three months and contains now more than 790,000 records.

I have tried to compare these databases on two characteristics: the distribution of references by language, and by subject matter.

DIA I already point out the major weakness of the ATLA religion database and the *Index theologicus*: I mean the coverage of the different languages. For this, I have selected all the articles, books and essays for the last fifty years. Here is the result on a graph. Atla covers publications in English for the most part, with good coverage of publications in German and obvious gaps in other European languages.

DIA As can be seen, for *Index theologicus*, even if the distribution of languages is a little more balanced than for ATLA, German and English languages are in the majority.

DIA From this point of view, it is clearly the *Index religiosus* that is the most balanced, giving an almost equivalent share to the major international languages.

DIA Here you can see on the graph the distribution of records by subject matter, again for the years 1968-2018:

The importance of Church history and theology is obvious, especially for the *Index religiosus*. This is logical, since it is the fusion of a bibliographic database dedicated to the history of Christianity with a database specialized in theology and religious sciences. **DIA** Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies come in second place for *Index religiosus* and *Index theologicus*. **DIA** It is very difficult to give an overview of the different major themes in ATLA.

I can easily show the interest of a specialized database, compared to a site like Google Scholar, which is widely used by researchers. I want to find articles on Jesuit activity in Argentina. In Google Scholar, I get a lot of references but I have to change the language for each search, and some of them are irrelevant, like the first one! The same search in the *Index religiosus* targeted my subject much more precisely, as we will see later.

Searching on all fields gives too many results, since it also includes for example publishing places, series titles (Toronto).

As the name implies, searching the "author" field will return only publications by one author. Exempli gratia: Melloni, Alberto (180 records). I click on Search. The list of 180 entries is displayed. Two views are possible: detailed and condensed, with various classification possibilities (date, author, title).

When possible, the link to Google Books is provided, as well as the main styles of bibliographic citation (MHRA, MLA, APA, Chicago).

You can also consult the author's profile and export the bibliographical references but I'll talk about that later.

The simple search also allows a general thematic search. An example will suffice to understand. As a discipline, I select the history of the Church and theology, for the Baltic Sea region and the Middle Ages. The result is 114 bibliographical references.

For serious researchers or those who are not in a hurry, it is of course the advanced search that should be used, because it offers many possibilities for a targeted research.

Here it is possible to combine the functions of the simple search with advanced bibliographic functions (title, journal or collection, type of publication, year of publication) and advanced thematic functions (index of subjects, historical figures, biblical references, Dead Sea Scrolls and 1983 Code of Canon Law).

A few examples to understand. I am looking for the publications of Professor Mathijs Lamberigts published in the journals *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* and *Augustiniana* (OR operator) for the years 1990 to 2019. Result: 20.

I empty the fields of my previous search (clear the fields)

This time I am looking for publications that concern the history of the Church and sport in Italy during the contemporary period. Result: 12.

I empty the fields again.

More specifically, I am looking for all the exegetical publications published between 2010 and 2019 on the theme of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John chapter 4, verses 1-30). Results: 2.

The Index religiosus is also an cross-referencing database. Here is a concrete example: I am searching for publications on Jansenism, related to St. Augustine, in the modern period, and in the Netherlands. Result: 4 hits.

I choose to see the article by Diana Stanciu published in the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* in 2012. There are links to the DHGE articles on Jansenism, Jansenius, St. Augustine and Julian of Eclanum. Other links point to the works of St. Augustine and Jansenius in the *Library of Latin Texts* (also on Brepolis). Finally, at the bottom, an external link leads to the full text of the article.

If I click on Goran Proot's article, *Augustine on stage*, I can select the collective work from which this article comes, *Augustine Beyond the Book*, of which there are two reviews (A. Dupont and Laura Holt, one of which is directly accessible to me).

It should be kept in mind that there are many different ways to search into bibliographic databases and that they can really give different results. It is therefore important to combine several methods.

Now it's time to export the result of my search and be able to retrieve it in Zotero and MS Word.

I need to know the recent publications devoted to the history of the Jesuits in Argentina. Result: 16 responses. If I select nothing, all the references will be exported. If I select a few records, only those will be exported.

I click on the "export" tab, I choose the "download" function, in format RIS, the one that gives me the best results in Zotero and in Endnote. I now open my Zotero Standalone software, File, Import, I only keep the publications that are not mine. I click on the right button "create a bibliography", Chicago style, in RTF format. In MS Word, I just have to open this RTF file to retrieve the bibliographic references.

You can still notice a specificity of the Index religiosus. We have introduced into the database the articles of the last years published in the *DHGE. Louvain Dictionary of Church History*.

I add a few words on additional features. the history allows you to keep all your searches during the session, to come back to them, to modify them, etc.

My email alerts: this sends to your email the list of new bibliographic references encoded on the queries you have saved.

The author and journal profile allows you to obtain synthetic information on an author, a journal or a topic, to examine the trends of the topics, to search for the most active authors in a research field, to search for the most suitable journal for a search. By the way, it is also very useful for answering the Quizz.

Finally, the "provide Feedback" function allows the user to send corrections or remarks on bibliographical references.

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