

**DHNB**  
**2026**  
Aarhus, Denmark

# Book of Abstracts

Digital Humanities in the Nordic and  
Baltic Countries

Krista Stinne Greve Rasmussen, Jon Tafdrup, Kirsten Vad, Katja Gottlieb (Eds.)

# Book of Abstracts & Programme

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The DHNB2026 conference, “Lost in Abundance: Encounters with the Non-Canonical”, aimed to foster fresh and critical approaches to uncovering overlooked literary trends, forgotten visual drifts, unconventional historical records, and other underrepresented cultural products. How might digital humanities guide us through this abundant yet underexplored landscape? What insights, challenges, and questions emerge when we re-direct our attention from canonical towards underexplored, neglected, or scattered data?

DHNB 2026 was organised by Center for Digital Textual Heritage and Center for Humanities Computing, Aarhus University.

**Programme committee:**

Katrine Laigaard Baunvig, Jon Tafdrup, Anda Baklane, Ernesta Kazakénaitė, Pascale Feldkamp, Mari Väina, Eiríkur Smári Sigurðarson, Andres Karjus, Pille Runnel, Mads Rosendahl, Kristoffer Laigaard Nielbo, Krista Stinne Greve Rasmussen, Kirsten Vad, Fedja Borcak, Martin Eessalu, Johan Malmstedt, Jens Wendel-Hansen, Katja Gottlieb, Kim Steen Ravn, Paula Gheorgiade, Marta Kipke, Petra Hermankova, Zafar Hussein, Magnus Bender, Yevhen Kostiuik, Per Møldrup-Dalum, Mia Jacobsen, Kasper Fyhn, Giacomo Bilotti, Johan Heinsen, Camilla Bøgeskov, Peter Vahlstrup, Jeppe Büchert Netterström, Kristian Pindstrup, Natália Fedorova, Stephan Smuts, Lauritz Holm Petersen, Rie Schmidt Eriksen, Sara Kolding, Nicolas Legrand, Alie Lassche, Frida Hæstrup, Anne Agersnap

The conference took place March 9–13, 2026, at Aarhus University, Denmark.

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# DHNB 2026

Digital Humanities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries

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Aarhus, March 11–13 2026

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14:30–15:00 LONG PAPER

[3]

### Imperial War Experiences of the Finnish Soldiers in the Balkan Encounters and Their Letters to Finnish Newspapers and Home in 1877-1878.

Aytac Yurukcu

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**Keywords:** *Digital history, emotional history, Finnish soldiers, collective memory, newspaper letters, imperial loyalty, encounters, national identity, correspondence networks.*

This paper examines a largely overlooked corpus of Finnish soldiers' letters from the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878 to explore how imperial loyalty and emerging national identity were negotiated through emotional and mediated communication. While scholarship on nationalism and empire has extensively theorized identity formation (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1992; Brubaker 1996), and Finnish historiography has addressed the war primarily at institutional and diplomatic levels (Laitila 2001; Parppe 2021), the affective experiences and communicative practices of Finnish rank-and-file soldiers have remained marginal. This study addresses that gap by analysing soldiers' correspondence as non-canonical sources that illuminate the emotional and translocal dimensions of imperial warfare.

The paper draws on a corpus of twenty-two published anonymous letters appearing in ten Finnish newspapers and approximately thirty private letters sent to family members during the Balkan campaign. These materials are examined using a mixed methodology that combines computational text analysis with close reading. Digital methods include keyword extraction and topic modeling to identify recurring emotional and ideological motifs; sentiment analysis to trace shifts between enthusiasm, ambivalence, and distress; and network analysis mapping the circulation of letters across newspapers, places of origin, and thematic clusters rather than interpersonal social ties. These distant-reading techniques are used heuristically and are complemented by close readings that situate individual voices within the broader emotional regime of nineteenth-century European warfare.

The analysis shows that Finnish soldiers often reproduced Russian imperial rhetoric emphasizing Christian liberation and humanitarian duty, yet their letters simultaneously reveal homesickness, moral uncertainty, and a growing sense of Finnish distinctiveness. When published in newspapers, private emotions were reframed through editorial practices, producing a layered discourse in which personal

affect intersected with imperial ideology and national interpretation. Censorship, mediation, and circulation thus shaped not only what was said, but how war was emotionally understood within Finland.

By foregrounding soldiers' letters as translocal, emotionally charged, and digitally recoverable sources, this paper contributes to debates in digital humanities, memory studies, and translocal history. It demonstrates how computational analysis of abundant digitized newspapers can recover marginalized voices while also requiring careful methodological reflection on scale, interpretation, and affect. Ultimately, the study repositions Finnish soldiers' correspondence as a crucial archive for understanding the emotional infrastructures of imperial war and the negotiated formation of national consciousness. By engaging critically with digital abundance and methodological scale, the paper reflects on the epistemological stakes of computational approaches to historical emotion. It argues that digital methods do not replace close reading, but make visible patterns of emotional circulation otherwise inaccessible.

Ultimately, this study situates Finnish soldiers' wartime writings within a multi-layered framework that combines digital corpus analysis, emotional discourse studies, and translocal history. It reveals how the Balkans, imagined as a site of moral duty and Christian brotherhood, became a mirror through which Finnish soldiers—and, by extension, Finnish society—negotiated questions of belonging, loyalty, and identity in the imperial context. (Doynov, 1978; Drake, 1909; Kansanaho, 1965; Snellman and Kalleinen, 2022). In revisiting these forgotten letters, we encounter not only the soldiers' voices but also the affective infrastructures that sustained imperial wars and shaped national imaginaries. The paper thus contributes to a richer understanding of the emotional and communicative dimensions of nineteenth-century warfare, highlighting how digital humanities can recover and reinterpret the non-canonical traces of imperial pasts.

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15:00–15:30 *LONG PAPER*

[4]

## A World in Print: Introducing a Danish-Norwegian corpus of historical newspapers

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**Keywords:** *Historical newspapers, Transkribus, BERT-model, ENO, dataset reconstruction*

This Data Descriptor introduces the dataset Enevældens Nyheder Online (News during Absolutism Online). The Enevældens Nyheder Online (ENO) dataset provides a reconstruction of the contents of