The idea of martyrdom features prominently in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Despite this, pre-modern Jews, Christians, and Muslims often understood martyrdom in radically different ways. This conference aims to explore both the similarities and differences between ideas of ‘dying for God’ in the three religions, stretching from the Hellenistic to the Medieval periods. In particular, it explores the concept of ‘martyrdom on the margins,’ that is, cases which diverge from the classic model of martyrdom most closely associated with the saints of the pre-Constantinian period. This may include, but is not limited to Jewish martyrs in the Seleucid and Roman periods, martyrs who emerged through intra-Christian violence, martyrs in Shi’i or Khariji Islam, or Jewish martyrdom at the time of the Crusades. It may also include reflections on the theological significance of martyrdom in the three religious traditions, the semantic range of the word ‘martyr’ in various pre-modern languages, the rhetoric of martyrdom and its connection to biblical tradition, early Christian, Rabbinic, Islamic and the Qur’an. We are also interested in possible influence between and among the three religions.

The goal is to understand martyrdom more broadly by exploring non-traditional manifestations of the practice, both as an event in time and its literary, liturgical, and theological afterlives. By studying martyrdom ‘on the margins,’ we stand to better understand what is central to tradition more broadly, the ways in which innovation is introduced, how old practices are revived, and how minority traditions become majority ones. Contemplating practices on the margins also prompts us to rethink what constitutes a ‘canon’; indeed, what texts constitute the most significant examples of martyrological literature and how can these be reconceptualized through study of sources often regarded as ‘peripheral’?

**Judaism: 9.00–11.00**

Jan Willem van Henten (University of Amsterdam)

Israel Yuval (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Anna Abulafia (University of Oxford)

**Christianity: 11:30–1:30**

Elizabeth Castelli (Barnard College)

Mark Edwards (University of Oxford)
Robin Darling Young (Catholic University of America) – *The Maccabees and the Theatre of Martyrdom in Origin*

**Islam: 3.00–5.00**

Sean Anthony (Ohio State University)

Adam Gaiser (Florida State University)

**Summing up: 5:30–6.00**

Christian Sahner (University of Oxford)