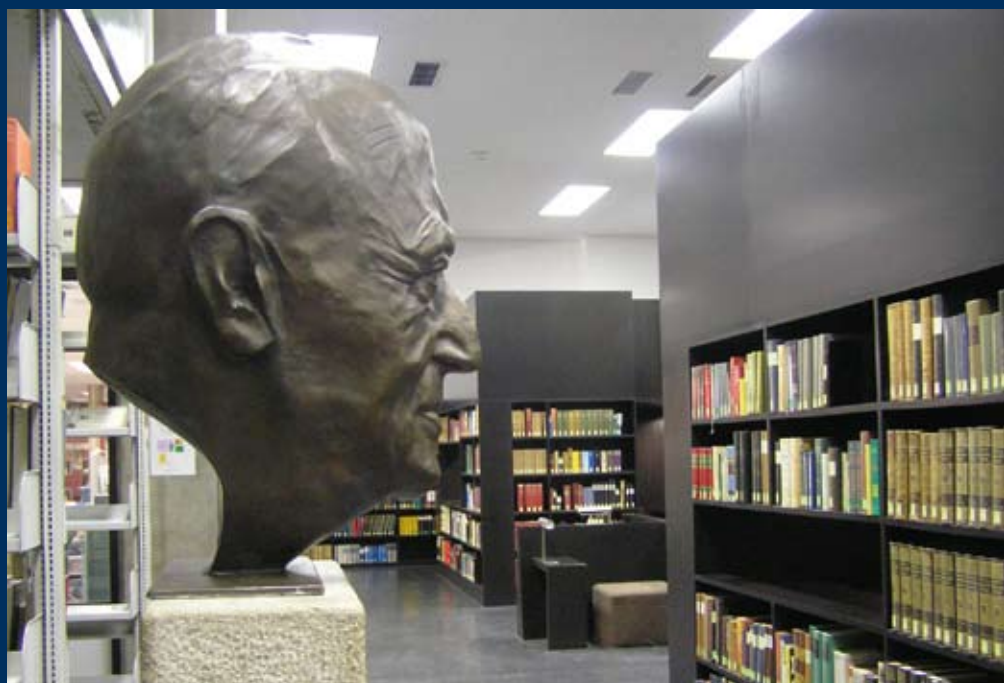
scantoweb-Technology assists to preserve Jewish cultural heritage

Frankfurt University Library posts unique Inventory of Jewish literature on the Internet with Visual Library



The Frankfurt University Library is one of the most significant academic libraries in Germany.

Extensive digitization and free access to Jewish periodical and book collections on the world wide web is one of the assignments within the Judaica Department of the Frankfurt University Library. Two digitization projects have already been successfully completed. The third digitization step, supported by the German Research Foundation, starts now in cooperation with the Chair for the History of German-Jewish Literature at Aachen University. By 2010 the virtual collection www.judaica-frankfurt.de will emerge from the 'Judaica Collection', which was famous in former times and is still very significant for Jewish Studies. The technical implementation is carried out by the semantics' software solution *Visual Library*. It automatically controls the processing workflow and is responsible for the presentation of images and meta data on the internet.

Collection maintenance and Information provision

The Frankfurt University Library (UL) owns the largest accumulation of scientific literature concerning the topics Judaism and Israel. This includes comprehensive collections of books and periodicals, which are of outstanding importance regarding Jewish Studies. However, a lot of print works were highly damaged as a result of intensive use and war losses so that circulations are no longer possible. At the same time the users' expectations increase concerning comprehensive online information service and literature provision.

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Dr. Rachel Heuberger, head of the Hebraica and Judaica Department.

Prints and Journals available online

Since years, the UL Frankfurt is a pioneer concerning digitization projects.

"It is our target to preserve the valuable but endangered old stock and, simultaneously, offer free access to indispensible research material to all students and academics worldwide", explains Dr. Rachel Heuberger, head of the Hebraica and Judaica Department at the UL Frankfurt, Main.

So far, two historic inventories of Jewish literature have already been captured digitally and presented online via an external service provider, using the software solution *Visual Library* of semantics. The online data base www.jewish-literature.de consists of approximately 800 'Jiddische Drucke' covering the 16th to the early 20th century. The prints give an impression of everyday life of the traditional Jewish communes from Western, Central and Eastern Europe. For example, there are bible versions for women, educational and medical guidebooks and classics of Jewish fiction – everything in Hebrew script. The prints are stored as printable images, which can be found by searching for authors or titles in local and national catalogues.

The portal for Jewish periodicals, www.compactmemory.de, allows the access to more than 100 Jewish periodicals and journals of the German speaking world between 1768 and 1938. Besides searching for authors and titles, this database additionally offers full-text retrieval for periodicals in Roman type. Moreover, a part of the periodicals has been developed intensively as regards content, so that it is possible to search for catchwords, figures, notes or single articles. Available texts can be converted to printable PDF.

According to Dr. Rachel Heuberger there is a positive response concerning the digitization projects: "At Compact Memory 500.000 hits are identified monthly and we know of 3.000 users worldwide searching regularly at the portal."

Judaica Collection recovered virtually

In consequence of the current positive feedback a further step will be taken to enlarge the range of digital provision for Jewish studies, whereby the

University Library Frankfurt am Main

The Frankfurt University Library is one of the most important academic libraries of Germany due to its' comprehensive stocks and collections. The library functions as a university with numerous regional tasks, as an academic library for Frankfurt and the Rhein-Main Area and as a specialized library regarding national literature provision. The total stock constitutes approximately 8 million media items of all departments and includes 11 collections of special subjects.

Since 1949 the special collection of the Judaica Department, which is one of the most significant collections concerning this topic, has acquired all the relevant publications on all aspects of post biblical Judaism without territorial or linguistic restrictions at home and abroad in a most comprehensive manner. Besides books and periodicals this includes microfilm and microfiche collections as well as electronic media.

Nearly 500 national and international subscriptions of periodicals are collected. The digital provision of the own stock is used internationally and conduces to active information service and literature provision improvement.

▸ www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/ssg/judaica.html

Walter Nagel

The system company Walter Nagel GmbH & Co. KG, founded in 1938, is specialized in the implementation of modern digital archives, document management systems and workflow solutions within industry, commerce, public administration and health care. Since more than 10 years the Bielefeld based company successfully develops innovative digitization solutions for libraries, archives, museums, academic consortia and research communities. Walter Nagel GmbH & Co. KG offers single source conceptions and solutions to its' ambitious clients. The company provides a wide range of services: conception of customized organizational flows, selection and implementation of hard and software, professional project management. Extensive consulting services assist clients in preparing investment applications. Among clients are well-known museums, libraries, administrations and higher education institutions in Germany.

▸ www.walternagel.de

semantics

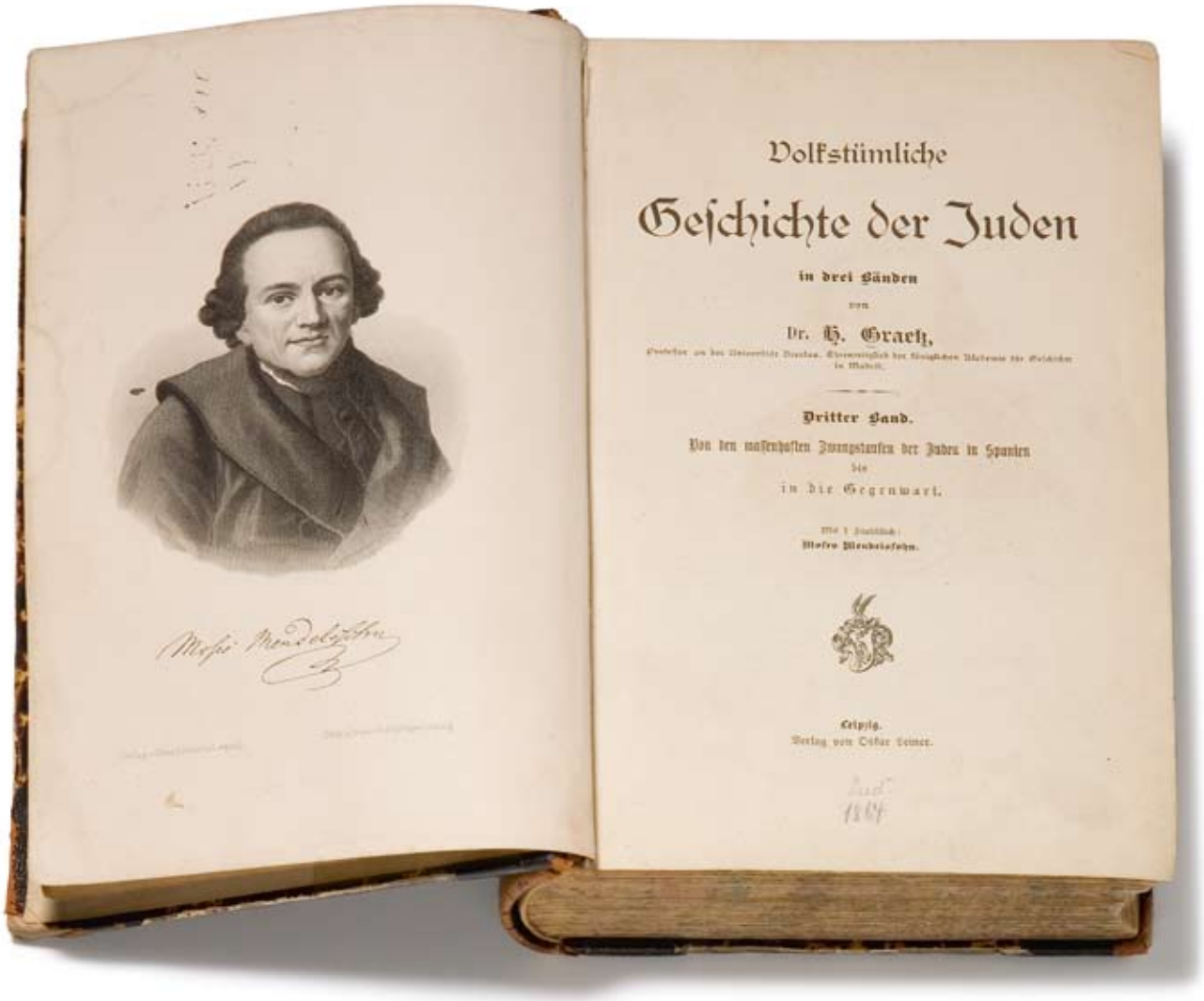
Semantics – based in Aachen – was founded by the linguists and current executives Prof. Dr. Christian Stetter and Kay Heiligenhaus, M.A., in the year 2000. The major business areas are corporate communication as well as document, logistic, and disposition management.

Semantics' software solutions regarding corporate communication are based on linguistic approaches, which allow customer-oriented and systematically organized communication management.

As regards large text and picture volumes semantics develops internet solutions for libraries and archives.

Besides project management the company offers consulting services and product development. Headquartered in Aachen, the company employs linguists, philologists, computer scientists, IT specialists as well as freelancer with backgrounds in communication and information science.

▸ www.semantics.de



Graetz, Heinrich: *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden in drei Bänden. Bd. 3: Von den massenhaften Zwangstaufen der Juden in Spanien bis in die Gegenwart.* Leipzig: Leiner [1889].

'Judaica Collection' is of central interest. The 'Judaica Collection' is also known as 'Freimann Collection' according to its' former curator, Prof. Dr. Aron Freimann (1871 – 1948), who made it to one of the most significant European libraries concerning Jewish Studies until 1933.

"The scope and high technical requirements on this digitization project were a challenge for all responsible persons", refers Dr. Rachel Heuberger. Financed by the German Research Foundation, the preparation of the virtual access of the 'Freimann Collection' shall be completed by 2010. The prints, which got lost or were destroyed during the National Socialism, will be supplied from domestic and foreign sources. Overall 18.000 works have to be digitized and indexed systematically by an efficient and time-saving method. "On completion of the work Prof. Dr. Freimann's 'Judaica Collection' will be reconstructed on the internet, so that a comprehensive virtual library will emerge", adds Dr. Rachel Heuberger.

scantoweb in perfection

The conception of this digitization project has been developed in close collaboration with the Chair for the History of German-Jewish Literature at Aachen University. With regard to long-term preservation, the works are microfilmed and scanned by a service provider. The development and classification system is consistent with Prof. Dr. Aron Freimann's system and will be carried out directly at Online Public Access Catalogue of Frankfurt University.

The core component of the processing workflow is based on the software *Visual Library*, which is distributed in Germany exclusively by the system company Walter Nagel, Bielefeld. The bibliographic meta data are imported via Z39.50 interface from the HEBIS union catalogue. Contemporaneously, *Visual Library* concatenates the captured catalogue entry with the associated digital images and accumulates the meta data for the online pres-

entation. Moreover, URN (Uniform Resource Names) generation is possible, so that long-term addressing is assured. For providing best online visibility and searchability the OAI (Open Archives Initiative) interface allows the meta data exchange with other portals and library systems.

A module for quality management executes different validity checks, e.g. examination of assignment catalogue entry and digital image or scanning resolution. Additionally, *Visual Library* allows a manual single sheet control and different picture optimizing possibilities.

Finally, the software produces display and download formates for the web presentation: JPEGs in different sizes and printable PDFs are derived from digital TIFF-masters. *Visual Library* also automatically generates RSS-Feeds, so that users are permanently informed about new imprints on the web. As a matter of course, *Visual Library* supports all meta data transmission standards postulated by the German Research Foundation for displaying digitized objects with the so-called 'DFG Viewer' (www.dfg-viewer.de).

User Advantages

"Based on an efficient technical infrastructure the use of the portal is easy, comfortable and result-oriented", explains Dr. Rachel Heuberger.

The user is able to search for authors, titles and catchwords as well as for special topics. Parts of the inventory are prepared with OCR, so that it is possible to look for special terms within these texts. The collection is integrated in superordinated information retrieval systems, which provide further information to users.

If available, the search results include links to modern literature with the same issue, which are disposable in the UL Frankfurt or in the German National Library. The automatic connection with Wikipedia – the online encyclopedia – delivers additional information, e.g. about the author of a book.

In order to have an overview of the book, there is a thumbnail presentation, whereas a navigation bar allows to select special pages and zoom into them as well as scrolling forward and backward. The research result is printable as PDF.

Currently 2.000 books of the 'Judaica Collection' are presented online. At the end of the project 2 million single pages of Jewish literature will be available on the internet for free.

"We protect precious historical sources and make them accessible to the general public by means of modern technologies. Restoring the 'Judaica Collection' virtually is a crucial contribution for preserving Jewish cultural heritage", concludes Dr. Rachel Heuberger.

Sales and Distribution
Walter Nagel GmbH & Co. KG
Tennenweg 7
33729 Bielefeld
Germany
T +49.5 21.9 24 79-0
F +49.5 21.9 24 79-47
info@walternagel.de
www.walternagel.de

Development
semantics
Kommunikationsmanagement GmbH
Viktoriaallee 45
52066 Aachen
Germany
T +49.2 41.89 49 89 29
F +49.2 41.89 49 89 30
info@semantics.de
www.semantics.de