

READ

Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents

D3.5. European Hands Report for Period 2

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Distribution: Public

<http://read.transkribus.eu/>

READ
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Executive Summary

In Y2 of the project we have developed and launched the website “FamousHands”.

We have kept the site as simple as possible in order to enable users to contribute with “their” FamousHands. The objective of the website is to make the Transkribus platform known among a broad public, but also archives and humanities scholars. From a strategical point of view we see the site also as a collection of documents which can be used to explain Writer Identification and Writer Retrieval (WIWR) to a broader public. This will be the task in Y3.

1. Introduction

The concept for the website was set up in Y1. It can be described in the following way:

- Call the website “FamousHands” (instead of the original title: EuropeanHands)
- Encourage users to provide at least one page image of the writing of a famous person (usually downloaded from a website of an archive or similar)
- Enable them to upload this page image (of course also more images are allowed as well) to the Transkribus platform via a simple web-interface
- Accept page images only if a minimum of criteria are provided:
 - o user needs to be registered in Transkribus
 - o page image must be available in sufficient quality (200ppi minimum)
 - o name of the famous person and a link to the Wikipedia (rep. WikiData) entry of this person must be provided
- Display all images of all famous hands on the Transkribus website in a convenient way, so that people can browse the collection and see who is already represented in the collection with which examples
- Use place of birth or similar information from WikiData to create a map of all famous persons but also a time frame with links to the Wikipedia entry
- Make all images available for further research so that also tools from other groups can be used to create “digital fingerprints” of the scripts

The site can be accessed via the following URL: <http://transkribus.eu/famousHands/>.

2. Implementation

In Y2 we have set up this service in the way described above. The implementation was done by using the basic structure (Bootstrap) of the Transkribus website. All features were realized as outlined above. The site was launched at the Transkribus User Conference in Vienna on 2nd of November 2017. The service is up and running, the only feature which was so far not implemented is the “digital fingerprint”.

The implementation uses as input the name of a person and retrieves automatically all other data from WikiData. These data are then used to create metadata, maps, and timelines. This means that only persons which have a Wikipedia (resp. WikiData) entry are regarded to be “famous”.

2.1. Landing page

The landing page consists of an image gallery which displays every 3 seconds another “famous person” with an example of his or her handwriting, as well as a portrait and a map which shows the birth place of the person (if known).

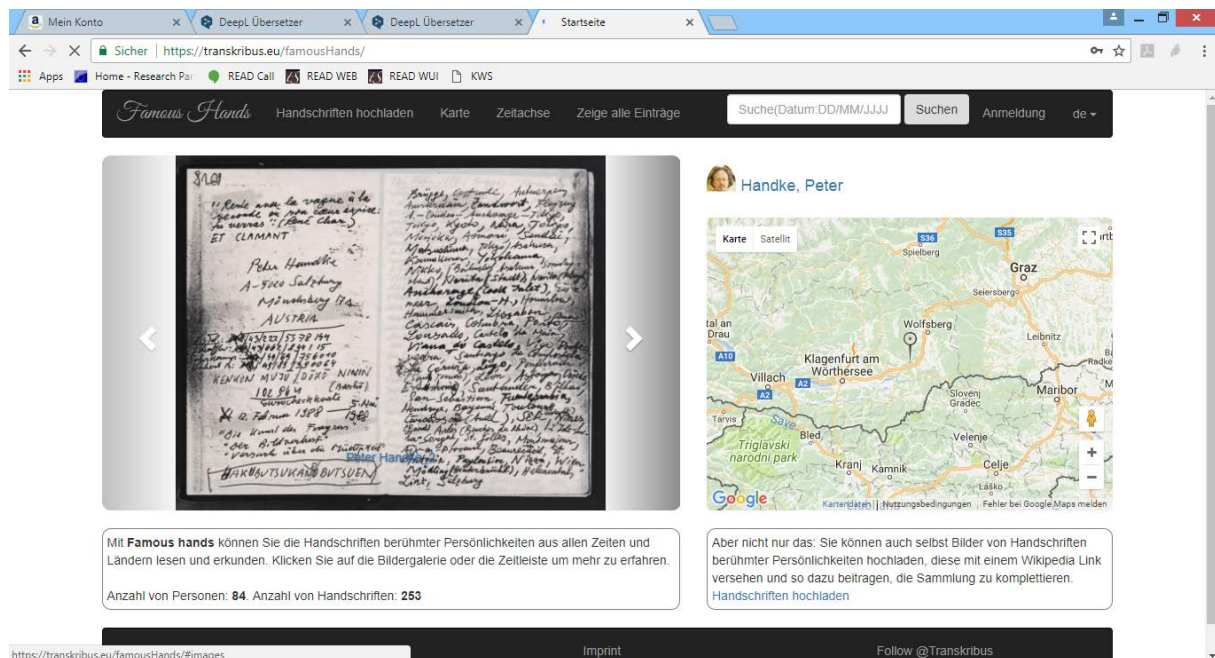


Figure 1 Landing page

2.2. Entry of a person

The entry for a person consists mainly of four elements:

- metadata indicating the name of the person, place and date of birth and death, as well as a link to Wikipedia with a preview of the summary.
- a portrait image (retrieved from WikiData)
- a map indicating where the person is born
- and a gallery with examples of the handwriting (provided by the user)

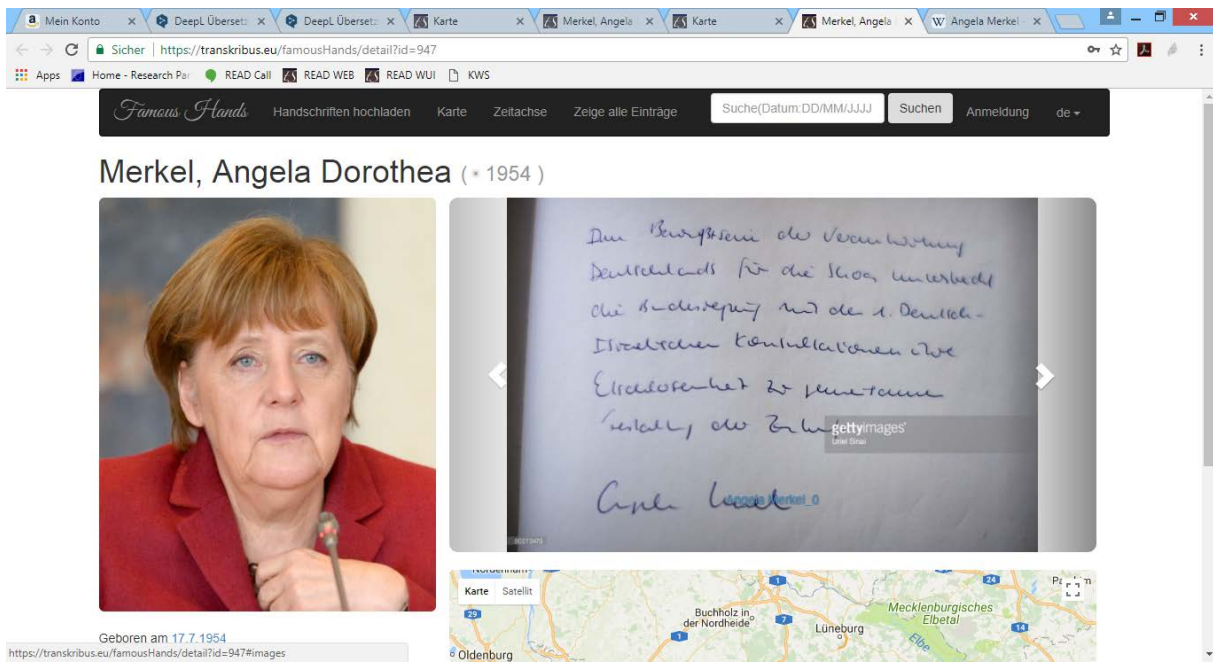


Figure 2 Entry of a person

2.3. Timeline

The timeline enables users to display all entries according to the birth date of the person. Below the example of Christoph Columbus:

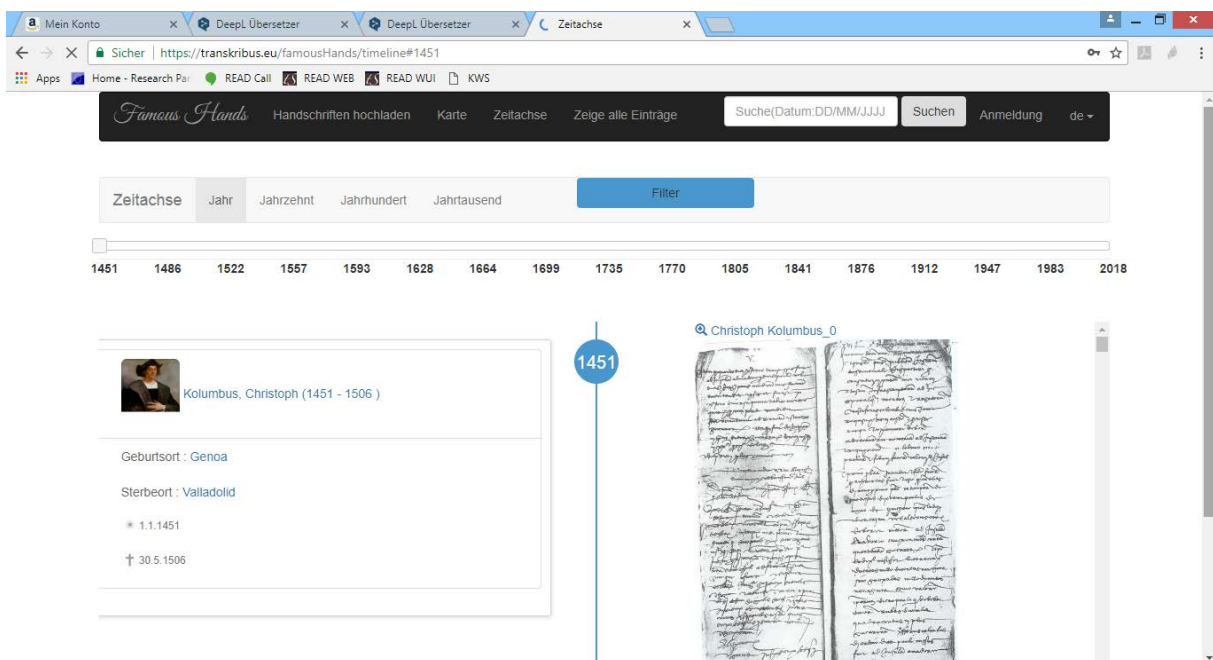


Figure 3 Timeline

With the slider users can quickly change the entry point for the timeline. There is also the chance to display all persons of a special decade, or century.

2.4. Map

All persons are displayed on a map with their place of birth and place of death. But the map can also be used to search e.g. for a place name and famous persons who are born nearby the

place are shown in a list and in the map. In this way users can explore easily which persons are already included in FamousHands.

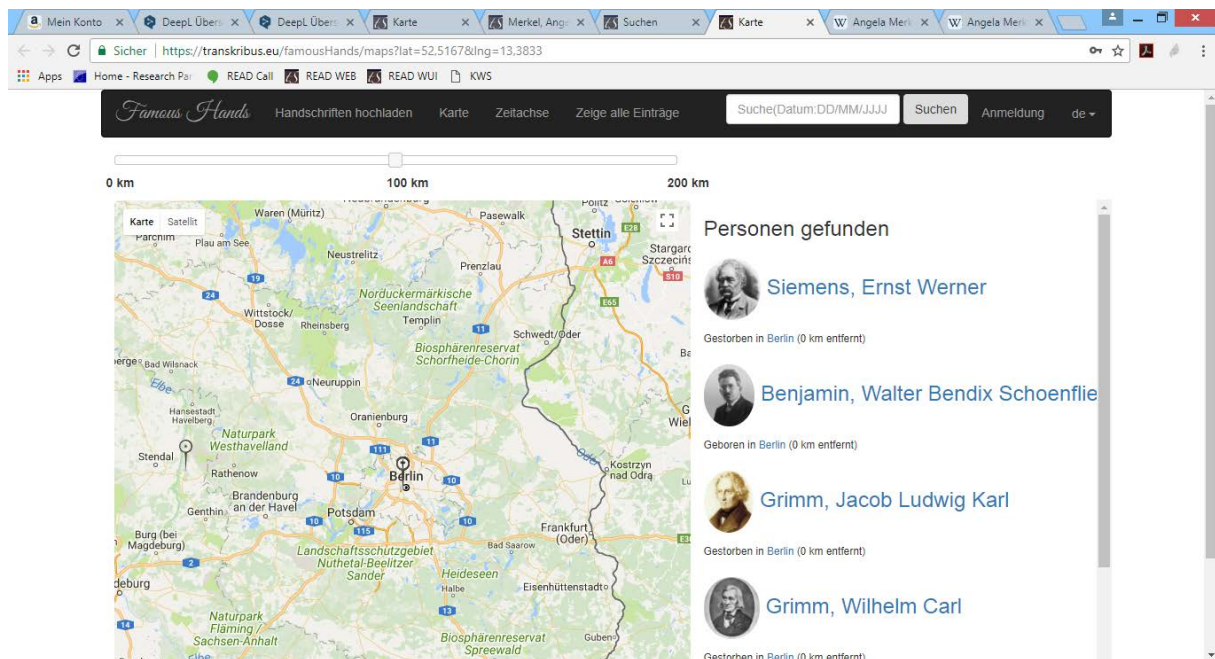


Figure 4 Famoushands in Berlin

2.5. Contributing to FamousHands

Users can also contribute to complete the collection. The prerequisite is that they are registered in Transkribus. The workflow to contribute to the collection is simple:

- Login to FamousHands
- Drop an image file of the writing of a famous person to the user interface (=upload)
- Search for this person's name in WikiData
- Select the person
- Create the entry

In detail:

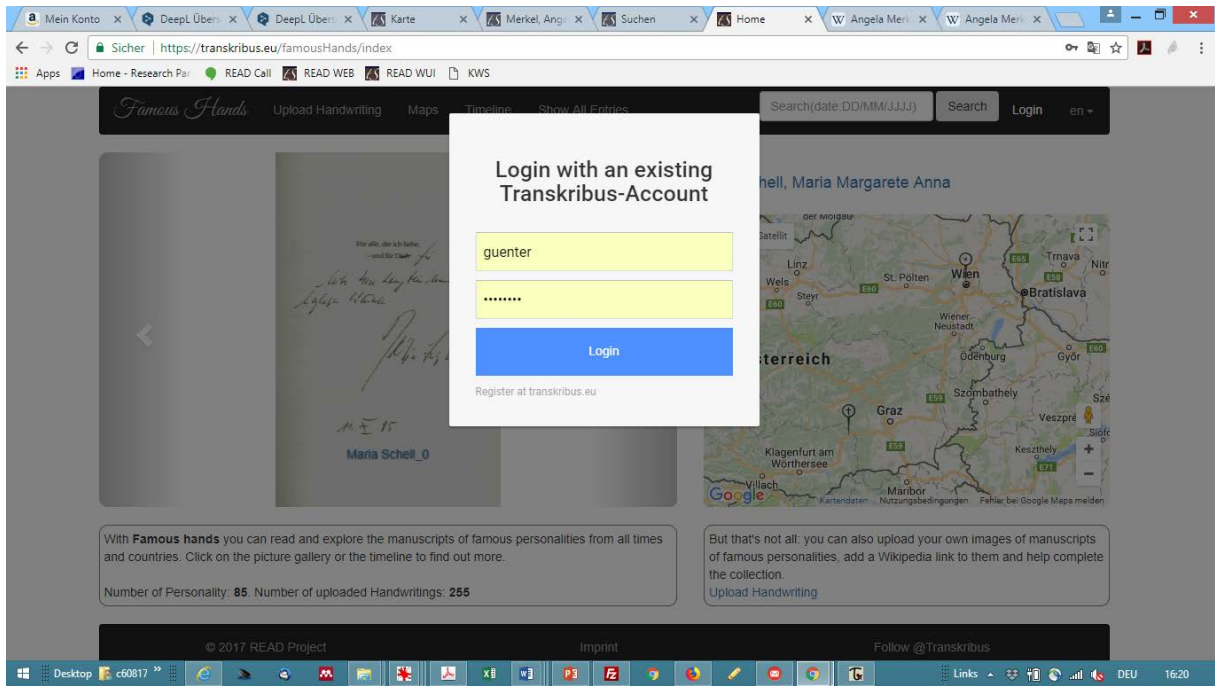


Figure 5 Login to FamousHands as Transkribus user

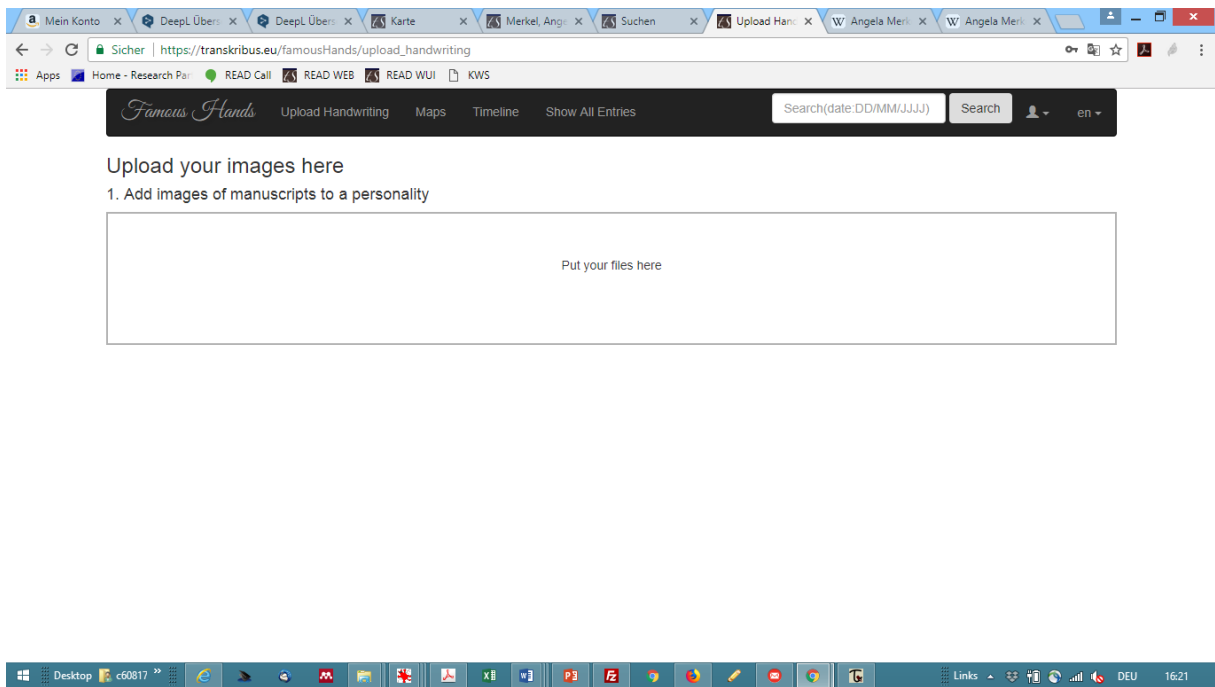


Figure 6 Upload of images

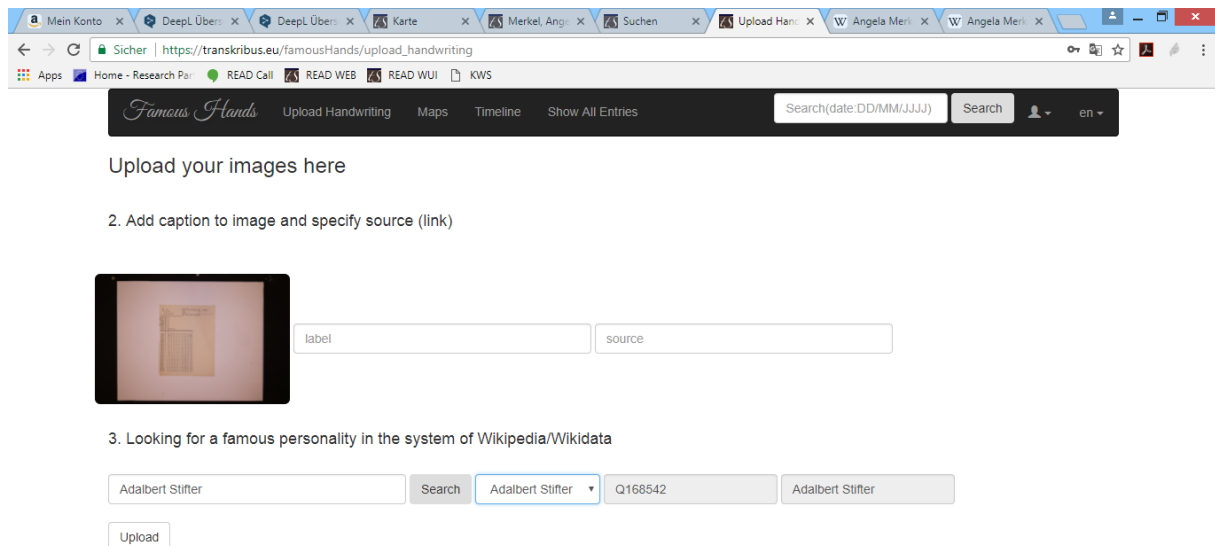


Figure 7 Add WikiData Identifier to the person name

As one can see the database in the background checks the name of the person against the WikiData site and retrieves the name with its unique identifier from WikiData. If there are several persons with the same or similar name the user can select the correct person by clicking on the very right button which links him to the description of the person in Wikipedia.

Once the user presses the upload button the record will be created and displayed on the FamousHands website.

In order to be able to edit or delete pages also an administration interface is available.

3. Outlook

In Y3 we will pursue two main objectives with respect to FamousHands:

- Make the site known to more users
Currently we have filled the database with nearly 100 entries. The site is fully functional, however we preferred a soft-launch in order to test it and also to avoid unnecessary user requests. Once we have a better understanding of the amount of user support needed we will more actively promote the site. It will also be linked on the Transkribus main website once the new website is launched.
- Implement Writer Identification and Writer Retrieval (“digital fingerprint”)
As we have outlined above one of the main ideas of this site is that it can be also used to showcase the performance of Writer Identification and Writer Retrieval. We will explore this aspect in more detail in Y3.
Very likely we will use the technology from CVL to simply order all images of the site by similarity. In this way a new view on the dataset could be provided to the users without claiming that all suggested similarities are actually correct. In this way users could playfully learn how to benefit from WIWR.