# Module 2
# Image acquisition & preprocessing

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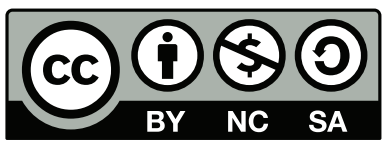



2015-09-14

# Motivation

- remember: the complete OCR workflow consists of several steps:
  1. image acquisition
  2. preprocessing
  3. (ground truth production, model training)
  4. recognition
  5. evaluation
  6. postprocessing: annotation, error correction, tagging, ...
- "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link":
  bad images/preprocessing will severely limit the quality of your end result
- trade-off: fast result against quality result (requires some manual processing)
- make an informed decision based on your objectives

# Image acquisition

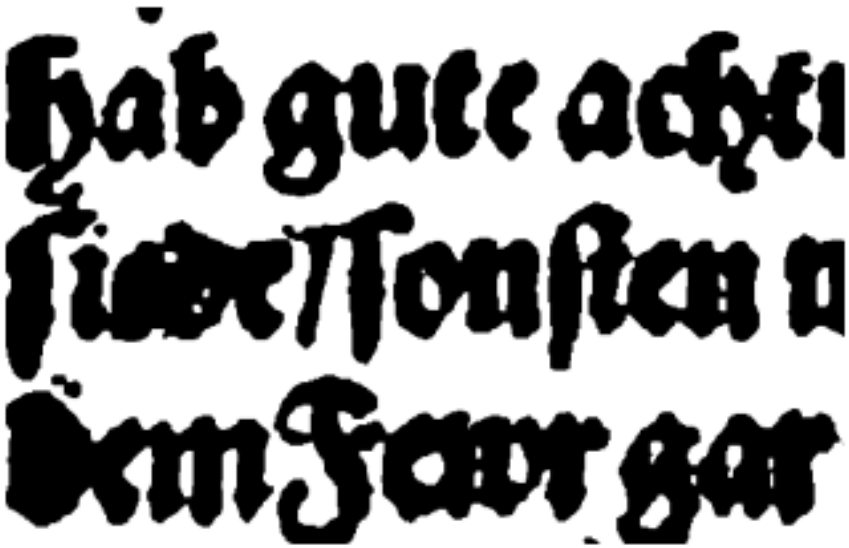
# Where to look for digitized books

- look for scans at HathiTrust, archive.org, Europeana, The European Library, DDB, Wikisource, BSB, or Google books
- try to find the best scan (Google books are often the worst); larger file sizes point to higher resolution
- especially good scans can be found in DFG-funded projects (VD16, VD17, VD18)
- if you cannot find a scan:
  - have it scanned from an institution (can be expensive)
  - your local research library may be able to help you
  - or do-it-yourself:
    - procure your own copy, take the pages apart and scan them
    - scan either in color or (at least) grayscale
    - resolution: preferably 300-400 dpi; higher resolution may not be better (connected components in letter shapes may fall apart)
  - the DFG digitisation guidelines may be helpful

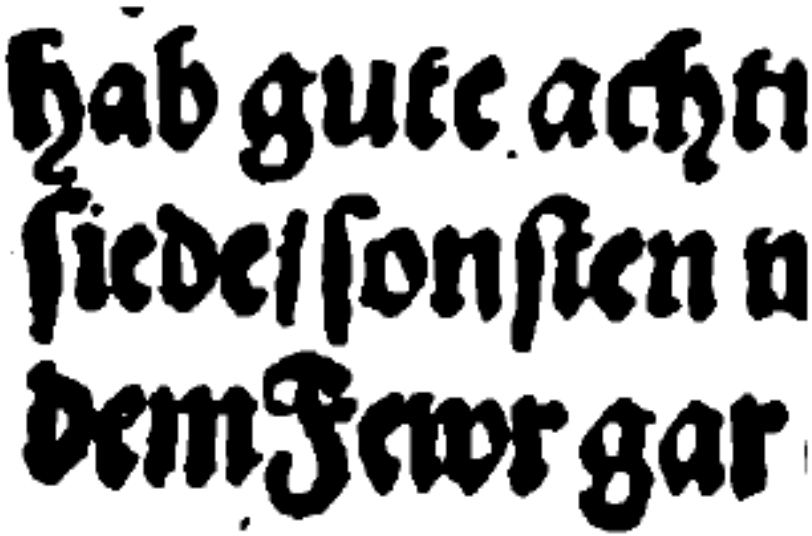
# Some tips for image acquisition

- often books found at Google are also available at a higher resolution at BSB (search BSB first)
- use the BSB OPACplus catalog to search for volumes (results can be filtered for online resources)
- at archive.org, download "single page processed JP2 zip" file rather than pdf or djvu files (the latter are downgraded in resolution)
- avoid binarized images, do your own binarization later on
- publicly available images tend to be downsized 150 dpi "service copies" (pdf or jgp); you can ask for higher resolution original png of tiff images
- you can still OCR 150 dpi material, but if the results are not good enough for you, get 300 dpi scans before you do heavy postcorrection

# Effect of image quality on recognition



(a) Google



(b) BSB

- the same scan with lower (Google) and higher (BSB) resolution
- after model training, the accuracy on test pages is 94% (Google) and 97% (BSB)

# Preprocessing

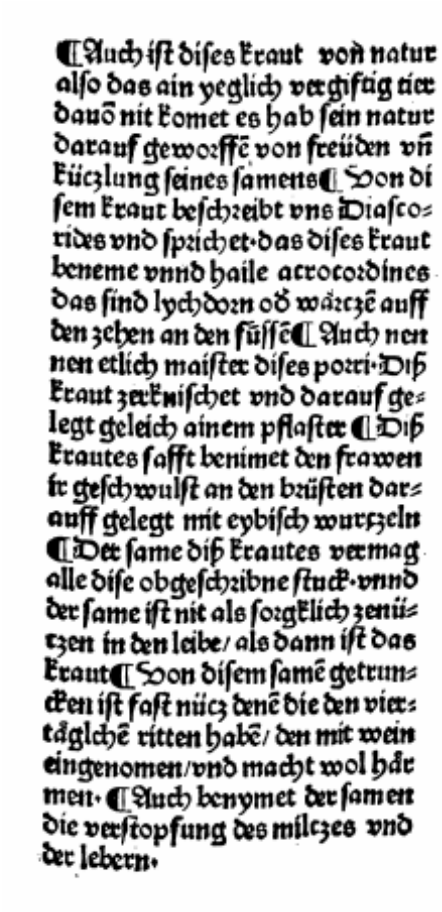
# Preprocessing tasks

- preprocessing consists of (some of) the following tasks:
  - splitting: split double-side images into single pages, or several columns into single-column images
  - cropping: get rid of (black) boundaries
  - deskewing: bring image to horizontal orientation
  - dewarping: "flatten" image, if scanned from warped pages
  - despeckle: noise reduction, suppress black spots ("speckles")
  - binarization: separate signal (characters, black) from noise (background, white)
  - zoning: separate text zones from non-text (images, graphs etc.); separate semantically different text zones (running heads, page numbers, footnotes, columns, ...)
  - line segment: cut text zones in single text lines
- all OCR engines have some kind of built-in preprocessing facility
- however, for optimal results it is often better to do some manual tool-assisted preprocessing

# Example: Gart der Gesundheit (printing of 1487)

## Johann Wonnecke von Kaub (Johannes von Cuba), Gart der Gesundheit (1487)

original image



¶Auch iſt diſes kraut von natur
alſo das ain yeglich vergiftig tier
dauō nit komet es hab ſein natur
darauf geworffē von freüden vñ
kützlung ſeines ſamens¶ Von di
ſem kraut beſchreibt vns Diaſco=
rides vnd ſprichet das diſes kraut
beneme vnnd haile atrocordines
das ſind lychdorn oō wärczē auff
den zehen an den füſſē¶ Auch nen
nen etlich maiſter diſes porri Diſ
kraut zerknifchet vnd darauf ge=
legt geleich ainem pflaſter¶ Diſ
krautes ſafft benimet den frawen
ir geſchwulſt an den brüſten dar=
auff gelegt mit eybiſch wurtzeln
¶Der ſame diſ krautes vermag
alle diſe obgeſchribne ſtuck vnnd
der ſame iſt nit als ſorgklich zenü=
tzen in den leibe/ als dann iſt das
kraut¶ Von diſem ſamē getrun=
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tägligē vitten habē/ den mit wein
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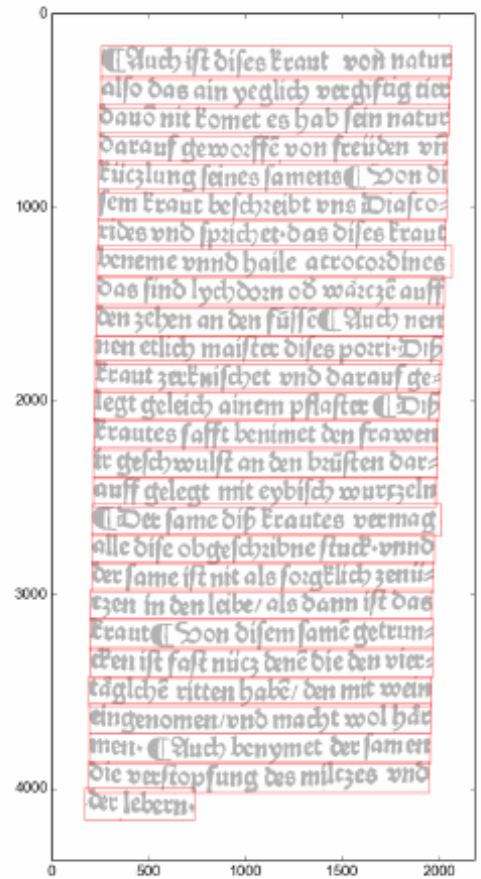
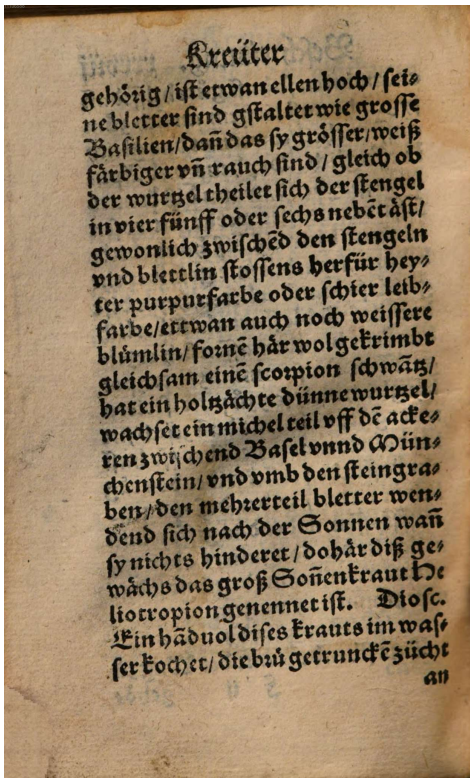
binarized text zone




line segmented

# Effect of preprocessing on recognition (Bodenstein 1557)



Kreüter

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Baſilien / dañ das ſy gröſſer / weiß
färbiger vñ rauch ſind / gleich ob
der wurtzel theilet ſich der ſtengel
in vier fünff oder ſechs nebēt äſt /
gewonlich zwiſchēd den ſtengeln
vnd blettlin ſtoſſens herfür hey-
ter purpurfarbe oder ſchier leib-
farbe / erwan auch noch weiſſere
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Ein hāduol diſes krauts im waſ-
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an

| OCR engine | char.acc. orig. | prepr. |
|---|---|---|
| Tesseract (Fraktur) | 35% | 71% |
| Abbyy (Fraktur + hist. lexicon) | 78% | 79% |

# Preparing the document

- to begin preprocessing, we need single page images in tif or png format
- often you will start from images contained in a single large pdf file or in other formats (jpg, JP2)
- document splitting and format conversion can be done by these open source tools:
  - pdf splitting: PDFtk (Linux: pdftk package)
  - format conversion (choose one of these for batch processing):
    - `convert` from ImageMagick suite
    - `convert` from GraphicsMagick suite
    - `pdftoppm, pdfimages` from Xpdf tools, or (Linux) from poppler-utils package
- if your image is blurred, has an unusual perspective, etc., you can get some help on image preprocessing here:
  - Fred's ImageMagick Scripts (ready-made scripts for a wide variety of tasks)
  - Dan Bloomberg's leptonica package (look at the dewarping example!)
- further preprocessing will be done by ScanTailor

# Example: Goethe, Wahlverwandtschaften (1809)

- available at BSB: Wahlverwandtschaften, vol. 1
- download and rename as `goethe.pdf`
- the following commands assume:
  - a Linux / MacOS system, but similar tools exist for Windows (see above)
  - that you have installed the necessary software (for Debian-flavored Linux variants, this is as easy as step 0)
- step 0: install software (Debian-flavored Linux)

```
$ sudo apt-get install pdftk poppler-utils \
    imagemagick scantailor
```

- step 1: split pdf in single pages

```
$ mkdir pdf
$ pdftk goethe.pdf burst output pdf/%04d.pdf
```

# Example (Goethe): pixel size, convert to png

- step 2: find pixel size of images in pdf
  - for scanned books, pdf is just a container format for included images
  - as a vector format, a pdf does not have a pixel size

```
$ pdfimages -list 0100.pdf
page   num  type   width height color comp bpc  enc
-------------------------------------------------
   1     0 image     714  1283  rgb     3   8  jpeg
```

  - the included jpeg image has 714x1283 pixels
  - for jpeg images in pdf, step 1 is just `pdfimages -j gdg.pdf gdg`
- step 3: convert pdf (or other format) to png

```
$ mkdir png
$ cd pdf
$ for f in pdf; do convert "$i" "${i/.pdf/.png]"; done
$ mv *.png ../png
```

# Example (Goethe): resolution

- step 4: find resolution of image (needed as input for ScanTailor)
  - sometimes the scanning resolution (dpi) is given in metadata (archive.org)
  - if you know the physical size of your page:
    divide pixel height (or width) by height (or width) in inch (1 in = 2.54 cm)
  - png image has 714x1283 pixels (same as jpeg;
    otherwise use convert with –density option)
  - take pixel measurements from png image with ruler (last page) at 100% image size (okular or other viewer)
  - rule of thumb: height of 6 text lines ca. 1 inch
  - pixels per inch (ppi, used in imaging) correspond to dots per inch (dpi, used in printing)

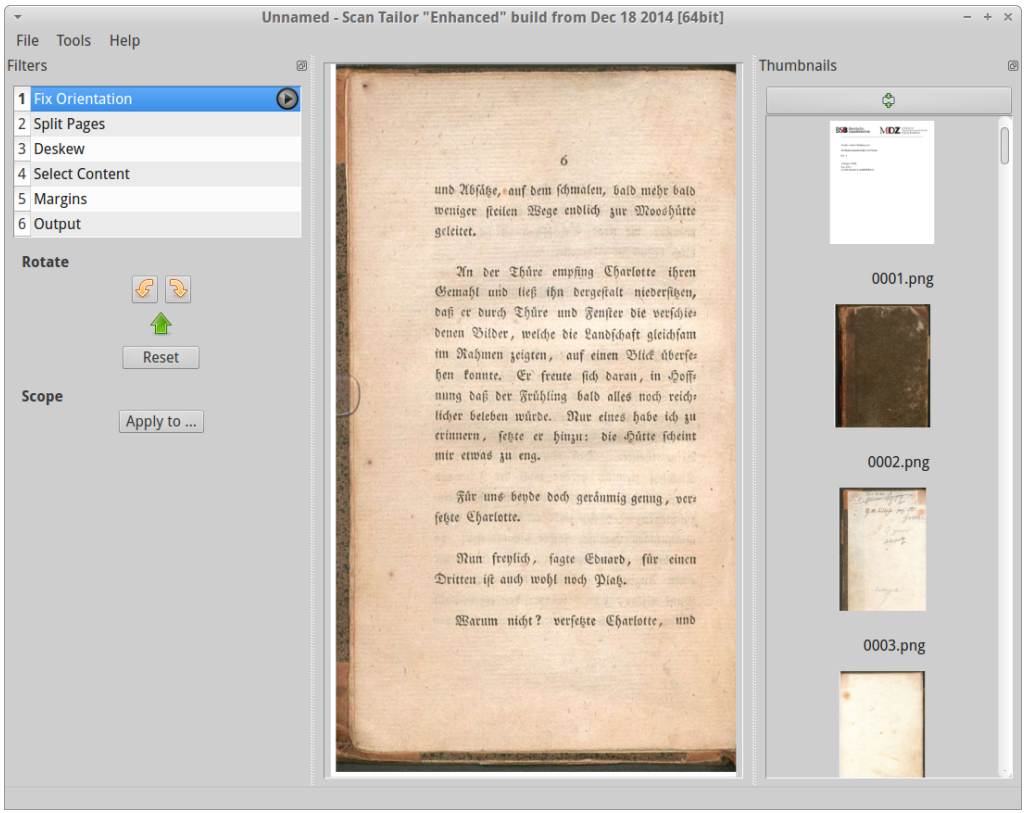
# Example (Goethe): resolution (cont'd)

in DFG scans, a ruler was scanned with one of the last pages:
measure ruler size in pixels

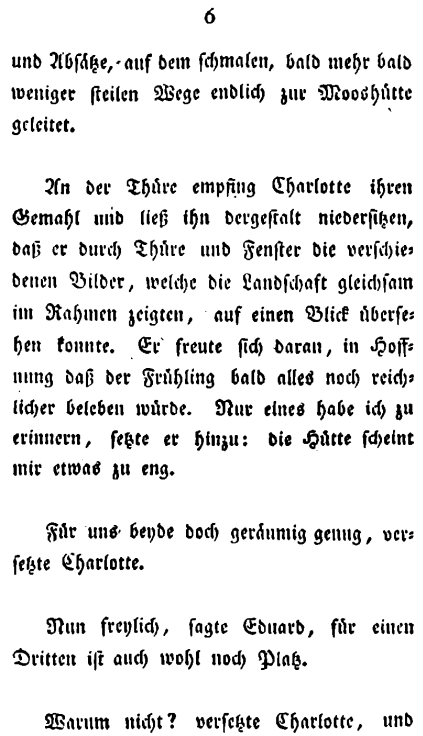

- here: 355 pixels/(5/2.54) inch = 180 ppi
- not ideal resolution, but this is what we got
- resolution of 150 .. 180 dpi to be expected for downloadable files (lower size saves bandwidth)

# Example (Goethe): ScanTailor

Convert png image into binarized tif using ScanTailor




ScanTailor with png of original image



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und Abſätze, auf dem ſchmalen, bald mehr bald weniger ſteilen Wege endlich zur Mooshütte geleitet.

An der Thüre empfing Charlotte ihren Gemahl und ließ ihn dergeſtalt niederſitzen, daß er durch Thüre und Fenſter die verſchiedenen Bilder, welche die Landſchaft gleichſam im Rahmen zeigten, auf einen Blick überſehen konnte. Er freute ſich daran, in Hoffnung daß der Frühling bald alles noch reichlicher beleben würde. Nur eines habe ich zu erinnern, ſetzte er hinzu: die Hütte ſcheint mir etwas zu eng.

Für uns beyde doch geräumig genug, verſetzte Charlotte.

Nun freylich, ſagte Eduard, für einen Dritten iſt auch wohl noch Platz.

Warum nicht? verſetzte Charlotte, und

tif image as result of preprocessing

# Example (Goethe): recognition compared

character vs. word accuracy in %:

| OCR engine | char. png | char. tif | word png | word tif |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tesseract | 86.42 | 96.06 | 68.18 | 84.55 |
| OCRopus | 95.33 | 96.06 | 82.73 | 89.09 |
| Abbyy FR 11 | 96.79 | 95.33 | 92.73 | 91.82 |

# Conclusion

- for 19th century Fraktur printings, ca. 95% character accuracy can be achieved by any engine (without training)
- separate preprocessing makes a difference for character (Tesseract) and word accuracies (Tesseract, OCRopus)
- Abbyy has very good automatic preprocessing, separate preprocessing is unnecessary