Digitization of documents

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Introduction

The importance of OCR and HTR

The Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is a bottleneck in many activities that need large quantities of legacy information:

- digital libraries
- corpus linguistics
- digital history
- ...

The importance of OCR and HTR

Nowadays OCR can perform 99% of accuracy on recent, good quality printed editions and it can reach 98% of accuracy on challenging printed documents

The new field of Handwritten Text Recognition is very promising, so that libraries, universities and other institutions (such as state archives) are planning to acquire the digital text not only from printed documents but also from manuscripts

Acquisition and pre-processing of digital images

Digital images and digital texts

Scanning is the process of acquiring information from two-dimensional or three-dimensional objects, in order to create digital images

Different operations can be performed on digital images of a document and digital texts:

- crop an arbitrary part
- change brightness and contrast
- compare the high fidelity of the layout and of the figures to the original manuscript or printed edition

- copy and paste it
- search it
- tokenize it
- count the tokens
- make indexes
 - ...

Scanners

Various kinds of scanners are available, but a simple flatbed scanner can be enough, if the document is not fragile. The coplanarity of the written surface of the document with the moving carriage of the scanner has a high impact on the accuracy of the recognition



Scanners

Currently documents are acquired also by smartphones, but the quality of the acquisition is poor, compared to a flatbed scanner



DPI and PPI

DPI means Dots per Inch and PPI means Pixels per Inch. In order to have an accurate OCR, 600 DPI are optimal, but 300 DPI can be acceptable.

The preservation of the master images and metadata

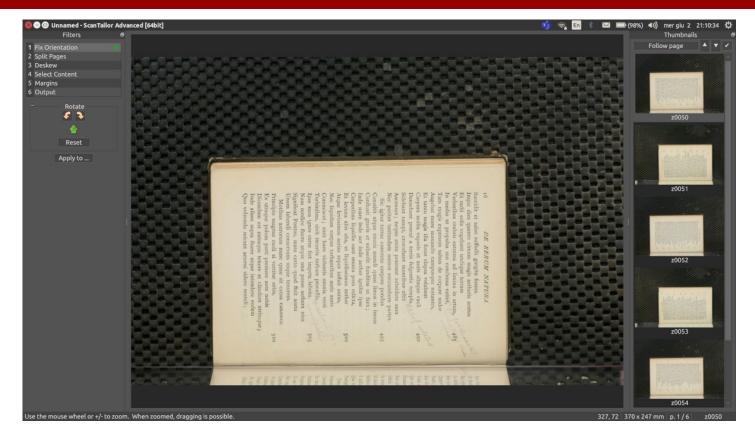
Along the digital text acquisition workflow one or more image elaborations are required. It is necessary to keep always the original images and possibly to preserve also the metadata related to the necessary transformations and use naming conventions for the files, with minimal metadata about dpi, color, etc.

OCR (or HTR) preprocessing on images

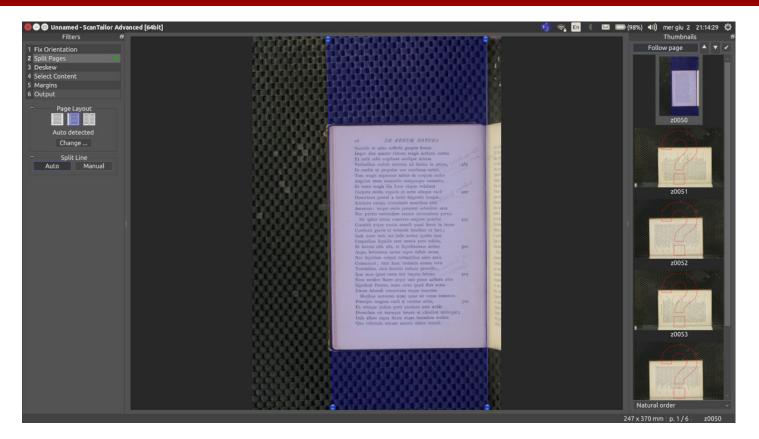
In order to improve the accuracy of OCR or HTR, images must be processed at least with the following operations:

- fixing orientation (if necessary)
- splitting pages (if two pages have been scanned together)
- deskewing (i.e. small rotation)
- selecting content
- adding margins
- change the output resolution (if necessary)
- binarization
- dewarping

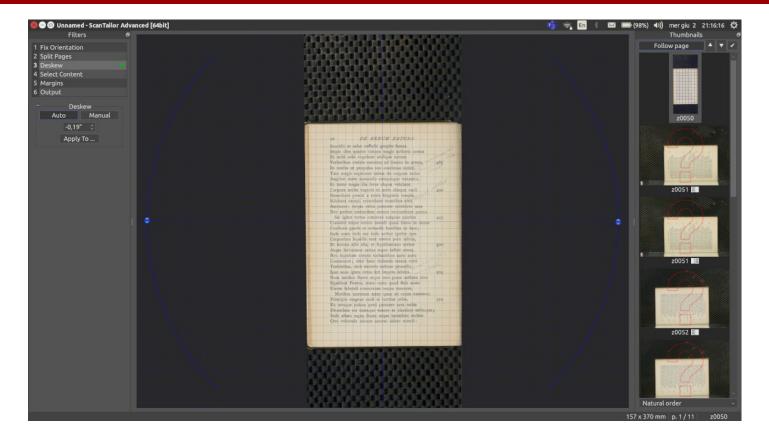
Fixing orientation



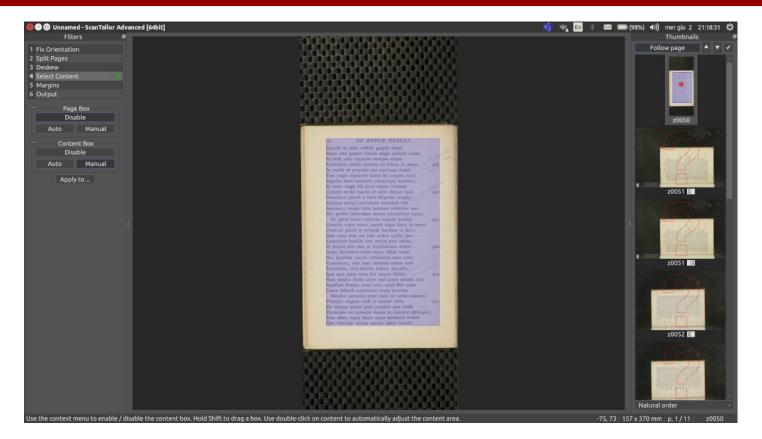
Splitting pages



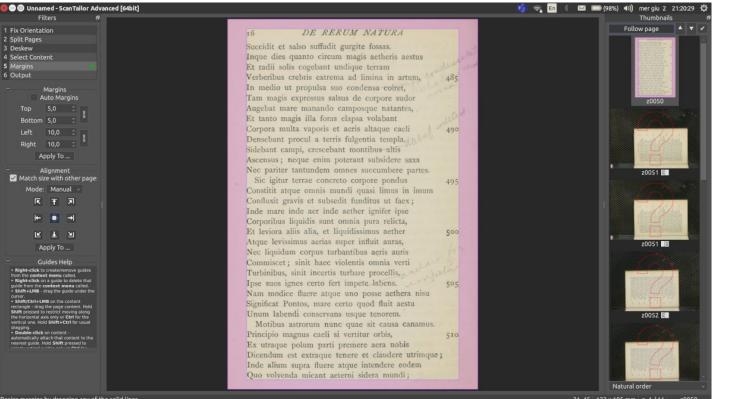
Deskewing



Selecting content



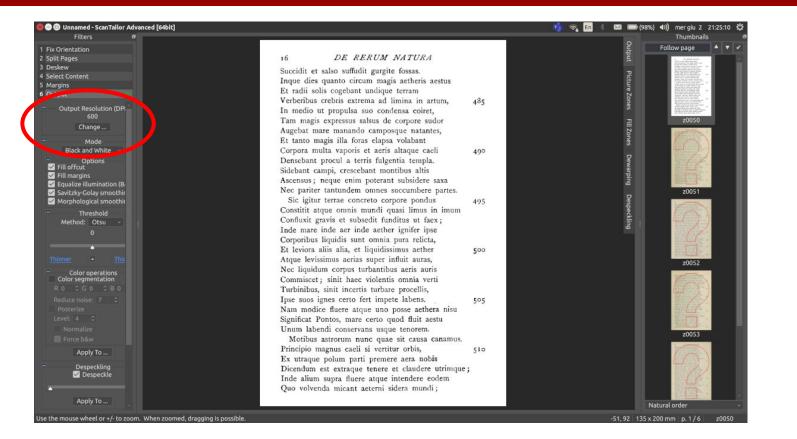
Adding margins



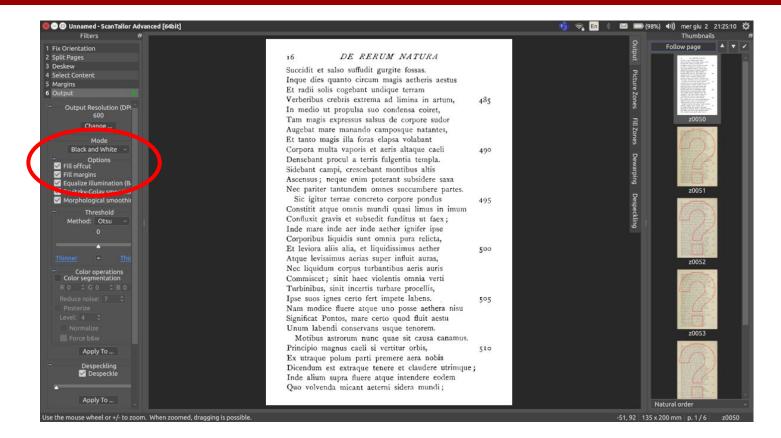
Resize margins by dragging any of the solid lines

^{-31, 45 132} x 195 mm p. 1 / 11 z0050

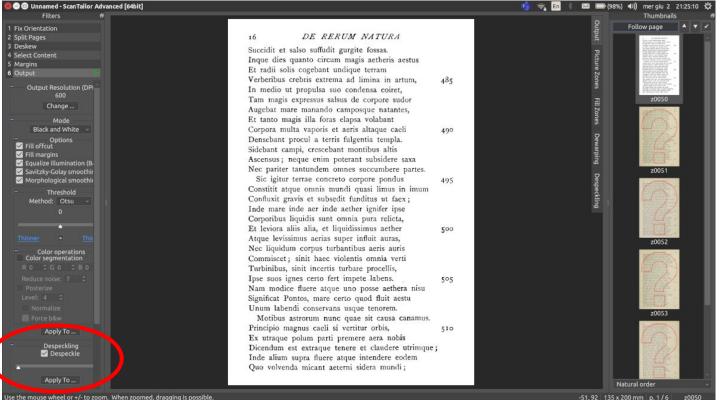
Changing resolution



Binarization

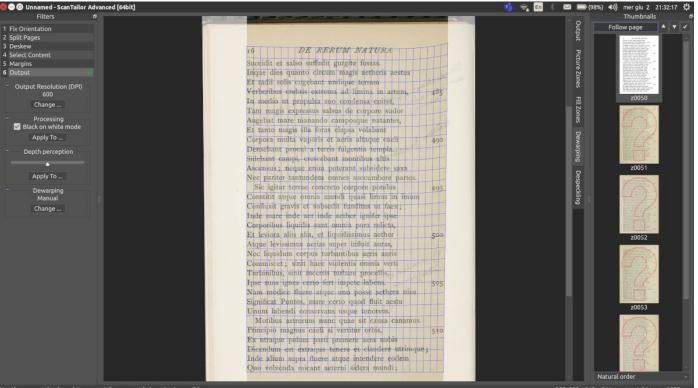


Despeckling



^{-51, 92 135} x 200 mm p. 1 / 6 z0050

Dewarping



Use the mouse wheel or +/- to zoom. When zoomed, dragging is possible.

292, 332 313 x 741 mm p. 1 / 6 z0050

Manual or automated?

On small projects, this operations usually are performed manually; on massive projects, usually they are performed automatically.



Compare processed and raw images on https://archive.org

Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Commercial applications

There are many commercial applications for Optical Character Recognition, such as Abbyy FineReader, Adobe Acrobat Pro, etc. (Among many other comparative evaluations, see for example: <u>https://www.adamenfroy.com/best-ocr-software</u>)

There are also many solutions online (e.g. a new service on GoogleDrive to extract text from PDF of images)

And finally there are many apps to capture images with a smartphone and convert them into text or searcheable PDFs.

Commercial applications: strength points

The main advantages of commercial software are:

- simple to install on Windows and Mac
- easy to use
- graphical interface

Commercial applications: weakness points

The main issues of commercial software are:

- necessity to renew the license for new versions
- scalability (when you must pay per page recognized)
- languages and scripts (FineReader has additional packages for old or ancient scripts, such as Fraktur)

Open source applications for OCR

The most performant open source applications for OCR are:

- Tesseract (<u>https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tesseract</u>)
- OCRopus (<u>https://github.com/ocropus/ocropy</u>) and its derivatives, listed below
- Kraken (<u>http://kraken.re</u>)
- Calamari (<u>https://github.com/Calamari-OCR/calamari</u>)

Another interesting OCR project is

• Gamera

Open source applications: strength points

The main advantages of these projects are:

- scalability (to process millions of pages)
- scientific research to process challenging documents (endangered languages, ancient languages and scripts, low quality paper and ink, damaged documents)
- support of the community

Open source applications: weakness points

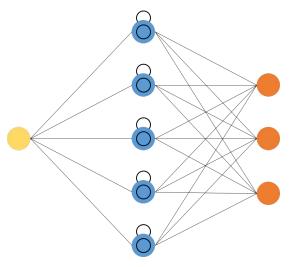
The main issues of these projects are:

- incompatible versions in quick evolution
- no graphical interface (only command line)
- not available for all the Operative Systems

What is an OCR engine?

In simple words, an OCR engine is a classifier, which assigns a **label** (i.e. a character or a sequence of characters) to an **image region**

For this reason, the most recent OCR engines are based on Neural Networks



datascience.stackexchange.com

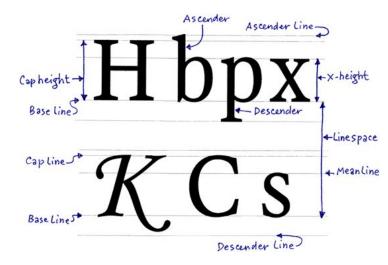
Layout analysis

In order to assign a label, at the character level, to an image region, regions must be identified by layout analysis and segmentation

The **layout analysis** decomposes the page in its textual and graphical components (e.g. columns of text, illustrations, and tables)

Segmentation

Textual blocks are hierarchically segmented in lines, words, and characters



que le processus de paix réussisse". "Il ne saurait en aucun cas être question de nouvelles concessions palestiniennes", a-t-il pour-

how-ocr-works.com

Segmentation issues

Bad segmentation causes bad OCR

Factors that must be taken into account:

- avoid artifacts during the image acquisition process, such as page warping (when it is possible, pages should be unbounded!)
- preprocess the images to reduce artifacts
- if an OCR engine makes a bad segmentation, try another one (for example, if Abbyy FineReader does not satisfy your needs, try tesseract or Kraken and vice versa)

Trained data sets

Both commercial and open source OCR applications are provided with pre-trained data sets

For this reason, we can perform the optical character recognition on a variety of languages and scripts, without taking care of the training phase

Training

When the accuracy of the recognition is not satisfactory, it is necessary to train the system

Training is based on an **accurate** association between **text** and **image**

The text that exactly matches the image is called **ground truth**

Some OCR engines, such as tesseract, need a small amount of ground truth, some others on the contrary need a large amount.

Training: the case of tesseract

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Performing OCR

tesseract -I <language(s)> <image> <output without suffix>

tesseract -l ita+lat img001.tiff doc001

(training data are available here: https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tessdata)

hocr

tesseract -l <language(s)> <image> <output without suffix> hocr

tesseract -l ita+lat img001.tiff doc001 hocr

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en" lang="en">
   <head>
6 <title></title>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html;charset=utf-8"/>
    <meta name='ocr-system' content='tesseract 5.0.0-alpha-20210401-94-ga968' />
    <meta name='ocr-capabilities' content='ocr page ocr carea ocr par ocr line ocrx word ocrp wconf'/>
</head>
l1 <body>
    <div class='ocr page' id='page 1' title='image "z0053.tif"; bbox 0 0 12181 19222; ppageno 0'>
     <div class='ocr carea' id='block 1 1' title="bbox 3910 479 11495 887">
       <span class='ocr line' id='line 1 1' title="bbox 3910 479 11495 887; baseline -0.006 -81; x size 400; x descenders</pre>
  93; x ascenders 120">
         <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 1' title='bbox 3910 500 5473 805; x wconf 68'>LIBER</span>
          <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 2' title='bbox 5838 479 8127 887; x wconf 51' lang='lat'>QUINTUS.</span>
         <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 3' title='bbox 11121 576 11227 763; x wconf 95' lang='lat'>I// Immes/
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         <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 4' title='bbox 11311 573 11495 854; x wconf 95' lang='lat'>9</span>
        </span>
       </div>
      <div class='ocr carea' id='block 1 2' title="bbox 402 1167 11496 18639">
       <span class='ocr line' id='line 1 2' title="bbox 525 1167 10060 1598; baseline -0.004 -88; x size 407; x descenders</pre>
  85: x ascenders 117">
          <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 5' title='bbox 525 1182 3279 1598; x wconf 89'>Quandoquidem</span>
          <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 6' title='bbox 3515 1198 4706 1505; x wconf 89'>claram</span>
          <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 7' title='box 4944 1185 6378 1593; x wconf 89'>speciem</span>
          <span class='ocrx word' id='word 1 8' title='bbox 6610 1241 8492 1583: x wconf 89'>certamque</span>
```

Early printed editions and Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR)

Early printed editions and manuscripts

Early printed editions and manuscripts are challenging:

- complex and/or irregular layout
- abbreviations
- ligatures
- irregular letters

Kraken on early printed editions

XPYZOZTOMOY HAUMJUP. augilian. 898

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898 Χ Ρ Υ Σ Ο Σ Τ Ο Μ Ο Υ Πανηγυρ. ἀμφιβαλλ. Λογ. ρμδ. ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΤΙΜΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΖΩΟΠΟΙΟΝ ΣΤΑΥΡρόν· καὶ εἰς τὸ, Σύ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν; καὶ εἰς τὸν τυφλὸν καὶ μονιλάλον· καὶ εἰς τὸ ῥητὸν τοῦ προφήτου Αμβακούμ. Κύριε, είσακήκοα την άκοην σου, και έφοβήθην, Αλῶς ἡμῖν καὶ σοφῶς ἡ προηνησαμένη νλῶσσα τοῦ σταυροῦ τὰς ἀκτῖνας έπέδειξεν, έκήρυξε σταυρόν, τὸν ψιλὸν μὲν τῆ λέξει, μέναν δὲ τῆ ένεργεία· έκήρυξε σταυρόν, δν γελῶσιν ἄπιστοι, καὶ τρέμουσι δαίμονες· έκήρυξε σταυρόν, ὃν ἕπηξαν οἱ Ιουδαῖοι, καὶ ὁ κόσμος προσεκύνησεν· 10 έδειξεν αύτοῦ καὶ ἀκτῖνας, ἀκτῖνας γἀρ τοῦ σταυροῦ ὑποτίθεται παρθενίαν λάμπουσαν· καὶ λάμψασαν ούχ ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ' ἐκ προνοίας τὸ κάλλος έκφήνασαν, και δπως, ἄκουε, πορνεύοντα παρέλαβεν ό σταυρός τὸν κόσμον, και σωφρονοῦντα πᾶσιν ἀνέδειξε, τοῦ σταυροῦ αἱ ἀκτῖνες οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν λόνων κηρύττονται, ἀλλὰ διά τῶν ἔργων έρμηνεύονται, οὐ χρείαν ἔχει σταυρὸς γλώσσης πειθούσης καὶ λέξεως έρμη- 15 νευούσης, άλλὰ ψυχῆς εύγνωμονούσης καὶ ἔργα δικαιοσύνης ἐπιτελούσης, ἀφ' οὖ σταυρὸς ἐπάγη, οἱ μέθυσοι νηστεύουσιν· ἀφ' οὖ σταυρὸς ἐπάγη, οἱ πόρνοι κήρυκες τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τῆς σωφροσύνης έγένοντο· ἀφ' οὖ σταυρὸς, τελῶναι εὐαγγελισταὶ, καὶ διῶκται κήρυκες τῆς εὐσεβείας έδείχθησαν, ἐπήγαγε δὲ καὶ ὁ προφητευσάμενος λόγος τὴν μνήμην τοῦ σταυροῦ, καὶ τὴν ῥίζαν. όίζα δὲ σταυροῦ ἡ παρθενία, ἡ τὸν παθόντα τεκρῦσα παρθένος, τίκτουσα οὐ νόμω φύσεως, ἀλλὰ 20 δυνάμει και ένεργεία τοῦ τεχνίτου τῆς φύσεως. μὴ οὖν ἀπαίτει ἐπὶ τῆς παρθένου τὸν ἄνδρα, έπεὶ ἀπαιτηθήση ἐπὶ τοῦ Αδὰμ τὴν γυναῖκα. ἐὰν γὰρ λέγης, πῶς ἐγέννησεν ἡ παρθένος άνευ άνδρός; έρῶ σοι κάγὼ, πῶς ἡ Εὕα προῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ Αδὰμ ἄνευ γυναικός; καὶ τί δεῖ σώματι σῶμα παραβάλλειν: τίς ὀ" τοῦτο μαγόμενος Ιουδαῖος: αἰσγυνέσθω ὅτι ἀναγινώσκων, ούδὲν ἐπιγινώσκει. ἀμφιβάλλει πῶς ἕτεκεν ἡ παρθένος; ἑρμηνεύσῃ πῶς ἕτεκεν ἡ 25 πέτρα τὸ ὕδωρ, οὐκ ἔχουσα ὑποκειμένην φλέβα, οὑ ποταμὸν ὑπεστορεσμένον, οὑ ῥίζαν ὑ-

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How to train Kraken

Tutorial:

http://kraken.re/training.html#training

Training ancient Greek, early editions:

https://github.com/pharos-alexandria/ocr-greek_cursive/blob/91d72606e2a60593e5eccafe14e6c98493a90ce7/README.md

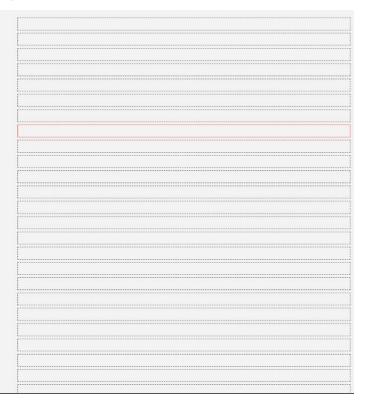
How to train Kraken

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overa, i carti In Adau Ala da anga Gur ma ana Ti Adau. O'S comos as gernos A Saine is Justic Calour, o Soloness A Sain is nosi un Cuonorous. aia Gre Las i-קיומולנו כא הדרי ושיוחט דוג מי שי חידודה, " עוויוייטא אלפי דע קנומ אע אוקטיקוטו דעט לואט TE Stabors, x, regar ideo & mraqua role very ideo (a oprava (a var ino האמשיות חניה זי דע אבליאט דעומווג מחיחדולני : בקיומצו טעותם שעי דה מי שר שחידוז ז ז צדעה לשול דע אפרטאט אד אולאעליה, צדעה לשול דה דיום לעוולטה דע אפרטאע אבדו אנגליין m. igerater, ed te the or una How. some Surser in the cripplas. is me onit דיוה נעוגמוו מודל, יבו להיה אים לע אופינה. הביילי ביועיווי אישאעו אי לו ום אודיאים Tai y feas, in a bein to mha tw. anas 22 & TS mhans, i y less Deod manues ואה, אפלי ליוחדיהה. ל דע דע דע אין על דנוף (בלול אביור צט בידא מדמה עו יו ב שיוד או ואין וואין וס ET Eus the ydea ou. Ent gazar and Car ydeas, i due brets, i eporta airo o outro. TBACTOS in JALYA, BACTO To as Dernes is Sinopa meratinge. Good no ling an pus dia Cri Las, Sur noine augui ichemen ini men in od ripe Tel y fors i Inous, i arecherge apols, inver 2 " Suisus in oregins megolonis only & ay nue starre-Saray : 21 g. It in wegin Britons The xuege a your on the & of the B Que, in Sol rice is ה אש שופיו מידול שאנוי ; וום נטעונט ליסו דם ועקופוטי " מיד א בפיריו אא ביוג כוע וקנוטוי ולצוי אם שבים בלה דוני בא אישלאט, בי הישור וני בשלולאט דע דואוידע, איאב הלב דוני ב עוראטידו-Ta The Marcias " " Sol nege dia Jumors and Sures and na Japals & opar. No Tro o Mai-205 Theory louien Guin madres Qui Exclustorate 21 a rew as were ville naplias. Questoris 200 21) 00000, Euwers, Some, ions lien oir in orthans, in a owers ant of so אבטלום. יש אבובוטה שבניל ל הצבוטה דיה ששינטה הלבה אלע עו די אני אביאי אביאי Report Agene roles allor, & partiones. in Anna Gi zapas, are Cherle & right Bring Onoi, To as Sernes is Sidea Seranuelas, 21 & The Contain Sunaun, of swo אלאיה להו אי עודת שבר בשאטו זה אל מקום. אל זו עיב לוילףם באו דוו: לאל א זה עבורי שוריraubaud, i smola she is regerageriza the senore. It Gura ou prime is Suspa, 25 Sina Brens du Segmes. E regros maoua coixos suria mourde dun à diamou when is sorting any imore the suber nor driveron rate of the airtie Cinha. 61-אבאי שי שואב אים אוצי הישטחותאל. בו אי אישטאיוטאלי בואבא, טעונ בוע דו שרי אידיnor. Star & Stife Sindra Sta now Two the coverday a sparatores.

Ka) Είνόπος ποβς ở έρωτόσουπο ορήμαθο Σπαρόσται τη άλληνία · Είλαπ Ιωλώη & 10 βλίπτας δαύνεπο · τυφλοί ωδαλέπουπο , χωλοί αθεταστύσι, τουρό εχώς σται, πλοχοί διατέλιζοπαι, ποθάωχελίζοπαι Πωγοίς Grid τύπο έπολητατο Ησαβας · Πουβμα Κυφωνίαται μαι δείλατου Γουσία με βαίρουπο ποι πάρουλο σταστολία.



Improving OCR and HTR



OCR is evaluated according to the **accuracy**, a measure that is expressed by the following formula

matches / (matches+mismatches+adds+dels)

according to the general formula

TP+TN / (TP+TN+FP+FN)

matches are the agreement between the OCR result and the ground truth

Techniques to improve OCR and HTR

OCR and HTR can be improved by **postprocessing**

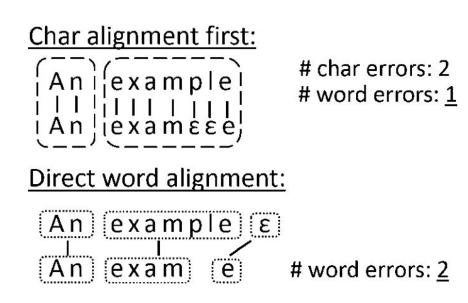
A couple of strategies are worthy of attention:

- alignment of multiple and independent OCR engines with efficient selecting criteria
- alignment to different editions of the same text, with criteria to distinguish between OCR errors to be corrected and genuine variants

Alignment

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10032-020-00359-9

GT: An example OCR: An exame



Exercise

Try to align two sequences of characters

https://bioboot.github.io/bimm143_W20/class-material/nw

Manual correction

WikiSource



WikiSource

Aiuto:Stato di Avanzamento del Lavoro

Aiuto: Stato di Avanzamento del Lavoro

Manuale > Guida del percorso di qualità dei testi > Stato di Avanzamento del Lavoro

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Lace (http://heml.mta.ca/lace)

Lace: Visualizing, Editing and Searching Polylingual OCR Results Latest Edits Search FAQ Editing Guide About

Zone Type

Line Mode

Clear Zones

- 1 ---

7

irraila. Sid nal ir të builia e obraois gherai tur oneλών. τό τε γαρ δργανον νευρώδες και ή φύσις των σκελών אדיטבעטארג. ערד' באדבן דעד' אית ביטלבעבדמו בעבוי, מימיאא אמן δοχεις η μη έχειν η μη ένταξθ' έχειν. τοις γαο έχουσιν ή משידה טוביוג משלטדוטי משידשי. בדו של דטוג אי דאג נטאבוג באשרוי ג ife dia the xinhrews bequainquen the aldely moder eral to σπέρμα συναβροισθέν, άλλ' έχ ώς έτοιμον δν εύθύς θιγέσι». ώσπερ τοις Ιχθύσιν. πάντα δ' έχει τα ζωοτόχα τώς δοχεις έν τω πρόσθεν ή έξω, πλήν έχών. Έτος δε πρός τη όσφύι μόνος, δια την αύτην αιτίαν δι ήνπερ και οι ζονιθες. ταχών 10 γαρ αναγκαίων γίνεσθαι τον συνδυασμόν αυτών· ου γαρ ώσπεο τα τετράποδα έπι τα πρανή έπιβαίνει, άλλ' δοθοί μίγνυνται δια τας απάνθας. δι ην μεν εν αιτίαν έχουσι τα Exorta opxeis, eppitai, nal di no aitíar ta per égu ta 6 δ' έντός. δσα δε μη έχει, καθάπερ είρηται, διά τε το μη 15 εῦ ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μόνον οὐκ ἔχει τοῦτο τὸ μόριον, nal dia tò draynaïor eirai taxeiar yherbai thr òxeiar. דטומטידה ל' לכור א דעי וצוטעי שטידוג אמן א דעי טשפעה. כו μέν γαρ ίχθύες όχεύουσι παραπίπτοντες και άπολύονται ταχέως. ώσπερ γαρ έπὶ τῶν ἀνδρώπων καὶ πάντων τῶν 30 тоเร้าพง ล่งล่าหุพ หลาลราวอ่ากลร รอ พาะบิแล พออโะรอิลเ รพิง yo-พรง รรีรอ อี สมสตรร รบนเGaires แต่ อิราวอนสาวเร รพร อิลกิลรταν, είσ) δε εύφθαρτοι τοῦτο μή ποιοῦντες. Ϋκων δεῖ ἐν τῶ συνδυασμώ το σπέρμα πέττειν αυτές, ώσπερ τα πεζά καλ ζωοτίκα, άλλ' ύπο της ώρας το σπέρμα πεπεμμένον ά-25 βρόον έχουσα, ώστε μή έν τω θεγγάνειν άλλήλων ποιείν.

A -

istotle (1829). Aristotelis De generatione animalium libri guinque. 📼

-20 -5 Previous 13 Next +5 +20

ένταῦθα, διὰ καὶ ἐν τῆ ὁμιλία ἡ σύντασις γίνεται τῶν σκελών τό τε γὰρ ὄργανον νευρώδες καὶ ή φύσις τών σκελών νευρώδης. ώστ' έπεὶ τοῦτ' οὐκ ἐνδέχεται ἔχειν, ἀνάγκη καὶ όρχεις η μή έχειν η μή ένταυθ έχειν τοις γάρ έχουσιν ή αὐτή θέσις ἀμφοτέρων αὐτῶν. ἔτι δὲ τοῖς γε τοὺς ὄρχεις ἔχουσιν έξω διὰ τῆς κινήσεως θερμαινομένου τοῦ αἰδοίου προέρχεται τὸ απέρμα συναθροιαθέν, άλλ' ούχ ώς έτοιμον δν εύθυς θεγούσιν. ώσπερ τοις ίχθύσω. πάντα δ' έχει τὰ ζωοτόκα τοὺς ὄρχεις έν τω πρόσθεν η έξω, πλήν έχίνου ούτος δέ πρός τη όσφύι μόνος, διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν δι' ῆνπερ καὶ οἱ ὄρνιθες, ταχὺν 10 γάρ άναγκαίου γίνεσθαι τὸν συνδυασμὸν αὐτῶν οὐ γάρ ώσπερ τὰ τετράποδα ἐπὶ τὰ πρανη ἐπιβαίνει, ἀλλ' ὀρθοί μίγνυνται διά τὰς ἀκάνθας, δι' ἢν μὲν οὖν αἰτίαν ἕχουσι τὰ έχοντα δρχεις, εξρηται, καὶ δι' ῆν αἰτίαν τὰ μέν ἔξω τὰ δ΄ έντός. 📖 × δσα δὲ μὴ ἔχει, καθάπερ εἴρηται, διά τε τὸ μὴ 15 εὐ άλλά τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μόνον οὐκ ἔχει τοῦτο τὸ μόριον, καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι ταχεῖαν γίνεσθαι τὴν ὀχείαν τοιαύτη δ' έστιν ή των ίχθύων φύσις και ή των δφεων οί μέν γάρ ζχθύες όχεύουσι παραπίπτοντες και άπολύονται ταχέως. ώσπερ γάρ έπὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων ἀνάγκη κατασχόντας τὰ πνεῦμα προῖεσθαι τὴν γονήν τοῦτο δ' ἐκείνοις συμβαίνει μὴ δεχομένοις τὴν θάλατταν, είσὶ δὲ εὔφθαρτοι τοῦτο μὴ ποιοῦντες. οὖκουν δεῖ ἐν τῷ

Conclusion

OCR and HTR

It is necessary to continue improving OCR accuracy, because it is the real bottleneck for computational linguistics and digital humanities

Currently OCR is very satisfactory on modern languages and documents with a simple layout, but it is challenging on early documents and old or ancient scripts

HTR is emerging with very promising results