

## ABBYY® FineReader XIX



### ABBYY Historic Font Technology Helps University Researchers Shed Light on the Past

OCR product unlocks texts containing old fonts and speeds up access to important information

The academic research project “The Discourse of German Nationalism and Anti-Semitism 1871-1918” is being conducted by the School of Languages, Linguistics and Film at Queen Mary, University of London, the School of European Languages, Culture and Society at University College London, and the Leo Baeck Institute (London). The project is funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

The project investigates the ideological and linguistic influence that a number of nationalistically-inclined and anti-Semitic public figures had on German propaganda during the decades leading up to the First World War. The analysis aims to illustrate the strategies and rhetoric employed by nationalist German writers to assert their opinion on race, culture, and civilization.

#### The Challenge

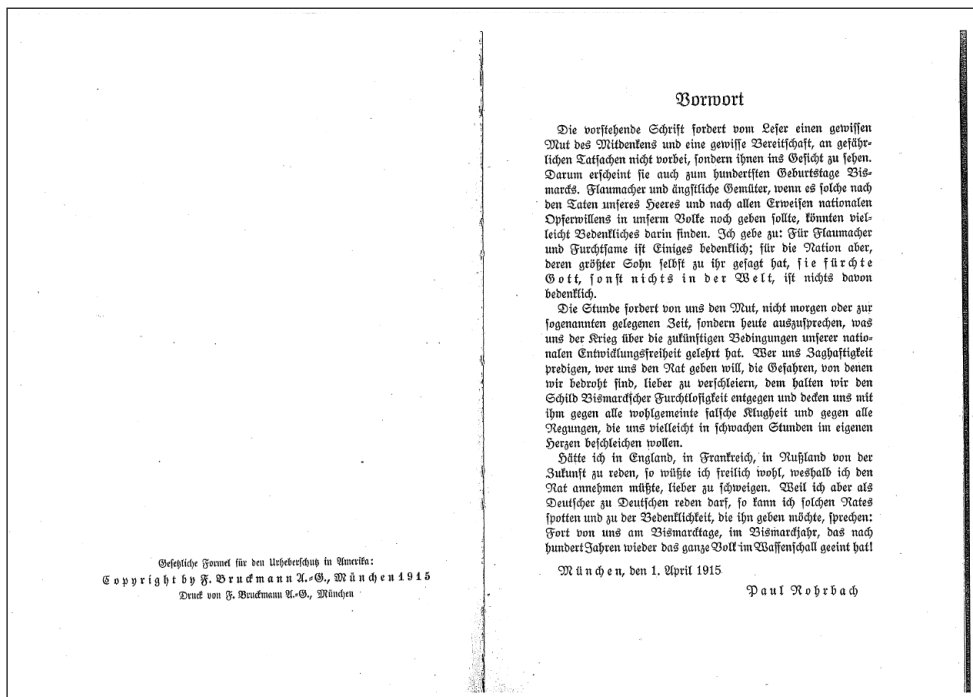
As a first step the research team sought to create a comprehensive archive of source texts that would provide a platform for thorough analysis. In order to accomplish this, the documents needed to be digitised and converted into editable and searchable texts. Adding to the challenge was the fact that most of the respective documents were written in “Fraktur” or “black letter” typescript. Although members of the team had already produced image-only PDF versions of the documents by scanning the prints, they still needed to convert these into editable text formats which could be used for digital analysis.

#### About Queen Mary, University of London

Queen Mary, University of London is one of London and the UK's leading research-focused higher education institutions. Amongst the largest of the colleges of the University of London with 16,000 students, Queen Mary's 3,000 staff teach and research across a wide range of subjects in Humanities, Social Sciences and Laws, in Medicine and Dentistry and in Science and Engineering.

#### Contact

[www.qmul.ac.uk](http://www.qmul.ac.uk)



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## The Solution

After due consideration, the team chose ABBYY FineReader XIX as the best solution for their conversion needs. ABBYY FineReader XIX is a special version of the award-winning FineReader optical character recognition (OCR) software for recognising old fonts such as Fraktur or black letter texts from the period between 1800 and 1938. It is designed to convert scans of old documents, books, and papers into text for the purpose of digital archiving and publishing, and it is the first omnifont OCR software for Fraktur.

“Manually re-typing the documents would have absorbed unnecessary time and resources. With ABBYY FineReader XIX we could start analyzing texts faster and more efficiently”, explains Dr. Stefan Baumgarten, Research Assistant for the project and the person responsible for the creation and technical administration of the empirical text corpus. “The key benefit for us was not just the ability to convert text from books and other source materials to editable text, but also the ability to have those converted results in a modern and easy to read font type. By converting our documents with ABBYY FineReader XIX we were able to process many times more pages than we could have with manually retyping the documents.”

## The outcome

With the help of ABBYY FineReader XIX the team of “The Discourse of German Nationalism and Anti-Semitism 1871-1918” could achieve a major benefit for the academic community. The project resulted in a comprehensive internet archive of primary sources that provides an important base for further research. Furthermore, the team encouraged interdisciplinary exchange between scholars by hosting an international conference entitled “English and German Nationalist and Anti-Semitic Discourse (1871-1945)” at their home university. The conference initiated a broader debate on German- and English-language nationalist and anti-Semitic discourse.

### About ABBYY

*ABBYY's optical character recognition technologies and products help people manage the increasing amount of information delivering powerful instruments which enable them to: unlock information from paper and digital documents, automatically acquire data, and process and store valuable information. Using ABBYY recognition and data capture products, organisations save money and effort typically spent on manual data entry and benefit from the ability to access information in new, faster and more efficient ways. Paper-intensive organisations from around the world use ABBYY software to automate their document capture business processes.*

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