Nina Janz

Student project - WAR LETTERS

TRANSKRIBUS USER CONFERENCE 2022

29-30 September 2022, Innsbruck

1. **Project Frame:**

Project WARLUX - Study on Luxembourgish soldiers in WWII
- their experiences based on war letters

Documents: War letters (front and from home): crowdsourced material
- crowdsourcing campaign 2021/22 in Luxembourg (5000 letters, 20 diaries)

Challenge: Divers material
- different handwritings, different types of documents

Language: German (90 %), Luxembourgish and French
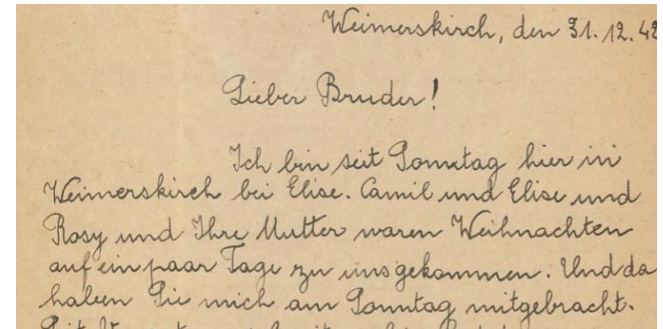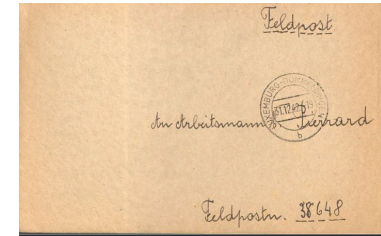
Students: 7 - Master in Contemporary History

Time frame: 1, 5 hours x 13 (February - May 2022)

2. Procedure

<u>Digitalisation of Documents:</u> (300 dpi, pdf)
<u>Storage</u>: University Server
<u>Selection of documents</u>: Case study about war experience between home and front (letters cover "both" sides), Collection Pierrard two brothers at the front and rich correspondance with home

Collection Pierrard, WARLUX
(University of Luxembourg

3. Workflow

<u>Introducing</u> Topic and type of documents
- working with ego-documents and war letters
<u>Training</u>: Hands-on Training Session with Transkribus Lite
<u>Developing of joint workflow</u>: Crowd working on joint collection in Transkribus Lite
- "protocol" of workflow
- group of 2 - uploading document, layout analysis, text recognition and edit/correct transcriptions - one edit, one reviewer for each document
- metadata, short summary, key words

Workflow/Protocol

Cote/Reference	Collection	Sender	Receiver	Date	Place
001-01	Collection Pierrard				
001-01-a	Collection Pierrard				
001-02	Collection Pierrard	Adolf Pierrard (Family letter)	Nikolas Pierrard	07.09.1943	Antoniusstra 3 Diekirch
001-03	Collection Pierra	Adolf Pierrard	Nikolas Pierrard	28.07.1943	Rambruch (Luxembour
001-04	Collection Pierra	Adolf Pierrard	Nikolas Pierrard	21.12.43	Rambruch (Luxembour

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4. In and Output

<u>Working with (digitized) ego-documents:</u> Research on and Reading war letters, analysing letters, implement transcriptions in the research process
- part of Digital History Focus and working with digital tools - developing (digital) source criticism
- weekly research journals and studying war letters and using digital tools

<u>Improving self-organisation</u> in a small research project
- developing a research workflow
- implementing the pitfalls, and results into the process
- improving research skills based on digitised material and platforms

5. Challenges

- Turning pages - was not possible
- Multi-language sections: Luxembourgish text regions (LU model does not exist (yet))
- Checking and adapting workflow
- Review student's work and their transcriptions regularly
- Input for studying "more" than doing the transcriptions

6. Lessons learned:

<u>Preparation is key</u>: tables, docs

<u>Defining clear goal</u>: "What is it all about?"

- students have to understand that Transkribus is a tool - what happened afterwards with the text?

<u>Transkribus Lite</u>: for first trials and small project suitable - but: Transkribus Expert might be a better choice for larger student projects

- more possibilities (turning pages) and model training

<u>"Entrusting"</u> students with complex tools and workflows

7. Results

Last (graded) presentation: Poster presentations on Analysis of War Letters

1. what is a war letter?
2. how can a war letter be used to study the war experiences of Luxembourg conscripts and their families?

Digital Transcriptions

1. what difficulties do you typically encounter when transcribing a source, whether in an analogue or digital environment?
2. how can you bring your research questions into the process of digitisation and transcription? Or how does this process help you answer your question?

⇨https://ninajanz.org/final-research-poster/

Stay connected with us!

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Blog: "Digital War History" and WARLUX
https://digiwarhist.hypotheses.org

https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/projects/warlux

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