Digitising Germanys Bahá'í archives and library

Alexander Meinhard 15.05.2022

How it all began

1971 collecting Bahá'í material – start of a hobby

the point of acceleration: once again, I had bought I book from the

publishing trust, I had forgotten to be already on my bookshelf

2010 to 2013 member of the NSAs committee for library and archive,

2010 to 2013 in charge of the library

2012 to 2013 in charge of the archive, as well

From 2013 Hermann Grossmann Archive

and: collecting Bahá'í material turned into a passion

Todays result (private)

- 3.5 rooms just Bahá'í material
- 19 shelves (= 116 m) books, magazines, journals
- 1 cupboard Bahá'í-CDs, -DVD, -films, -slides
- + 3500 MCs with Bahá'í speeches
- + all digitised materials

Todays result (public)

The only research desk in Germany for the "public"

All but one German Bahá'í magazines online under bahai.works

✓ Wirklichkeit

✓ Sonne der Wahrheit status: Index and proofread✓ Bahá'í Briefe: status: Index and proofread

✓ Tempora

All German pamphlets online under bahai.works in future

2 books published

Aus den Erinnerungen von 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akká und Haifa, p. 378 (Memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 'Akká and Haifa; notes taken by Dr. Josephine Fallscheer-Zürcher)

2022 'Abdu'l-Bahá – Briefe und Botschaften an Deutschland, 688 p.

('Abdu'l-Bahá - Tablets and messages to Germany)

(2022) 'Abdu'l-Bahá – 100 years of Tablet to Prof. Forel, app. 300 p. (in progress)

How I have got there (I)

Steep learning curve from scratch re work of a library and an archive

- elaborated a concept for the German NSA on how to build up a library
- pupil on archiving under Günther Maltz
- IT: state of the art PC with 2 screens, audio-system, scanner, printer

How I have got there (II)

Steep learning curve from scratch re work of a library and an archive

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Achievements till 2013

- > Five NSA-libraries merged into one
 - ✓ official NSA library,
 - ✓ historic library in the archives,
 - ✓ Persian library,
 - ✓ library of the publishing trust,
 - ✓ library in the secretariat of the NSA

How I have got there (III)

Achievements till 2013 (cont.)

- requests by Bahá'ís to take their own Bahá'í library and material for the NSAs when they had to size down in space for whatever reason
 - not really welcomed by Günter Maltz
 - not appreciated by the NSA
 - but a hidden treasure to fill gaps of the NSAs library
 - > and to help those who cannot afford to spend money on expensive Bahá'í publications
- photos of Bahá'ís prior to 1950 digitized
- > 80+ Blueprints of the House of Worship (Langenhain) digitized
- > vinyl record with 'Abdu'l-Bahás voice digitized
- movies digitized
 - > 1936 summer school
 - > 1964 Amatu'l-Bahá opening the House of Worship (Langenhain)

How I have got there (IV)

Achievements till 2013 (cont.)

BIBSYS (Bibliothek-System, i.e. library system)

open source software

✓ Debian Linux (6.0) - operating system

✓ Apache 2.2 - webserver,

✓ PHP 5.2 - interpreter,

✓ MYSQL 5.0 - database-management-system,

✓ Drupal 6.06 - CMS/Framework.

√ technically: accessible via VPN from all over the world

How I have got there (V)

Achievements till 2013 (cont.)

BIBSYS

five levels of operation:

✓ reader - level 1 research and access to result list

✓ reader - level 2 as "1" plus access to metadata, only

✓ reader - level 3 as "2" plus access to all attachments

✓ Librarian as "reader3 " plus

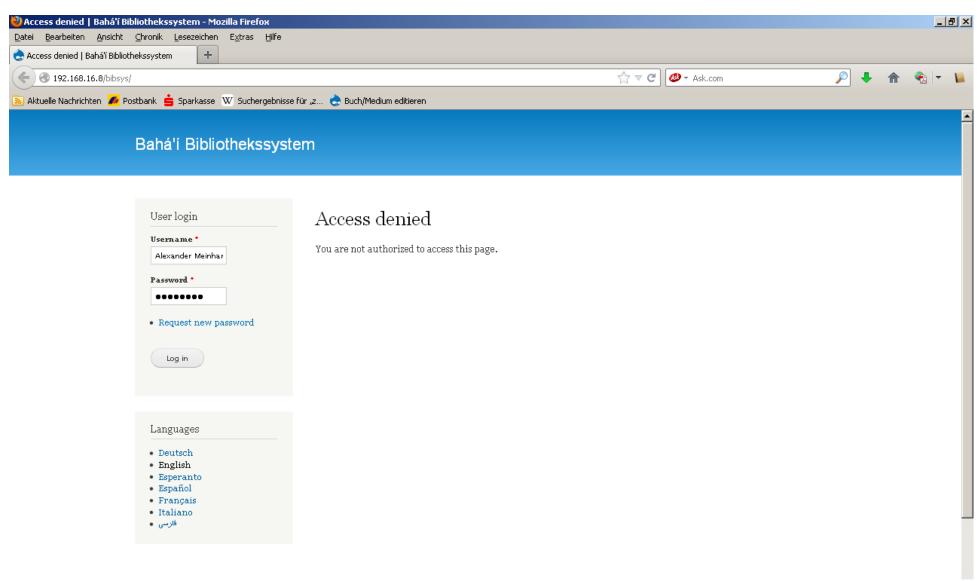
adding, altering, deleting fields

adding altering, deleting users

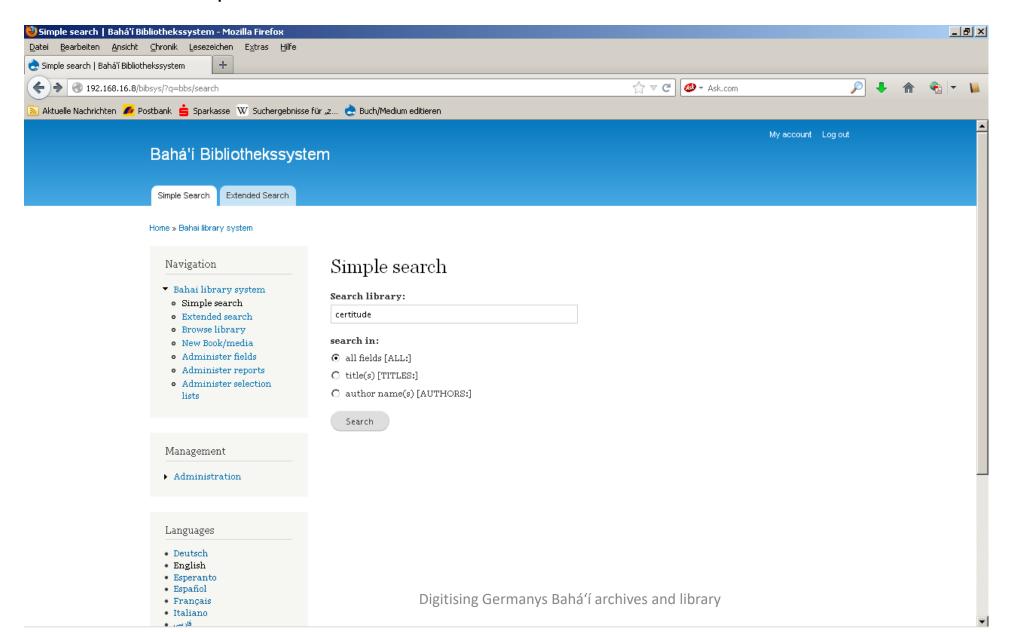
adding altering, deleting languages for main menue

✓ IT-Admin no restrictions

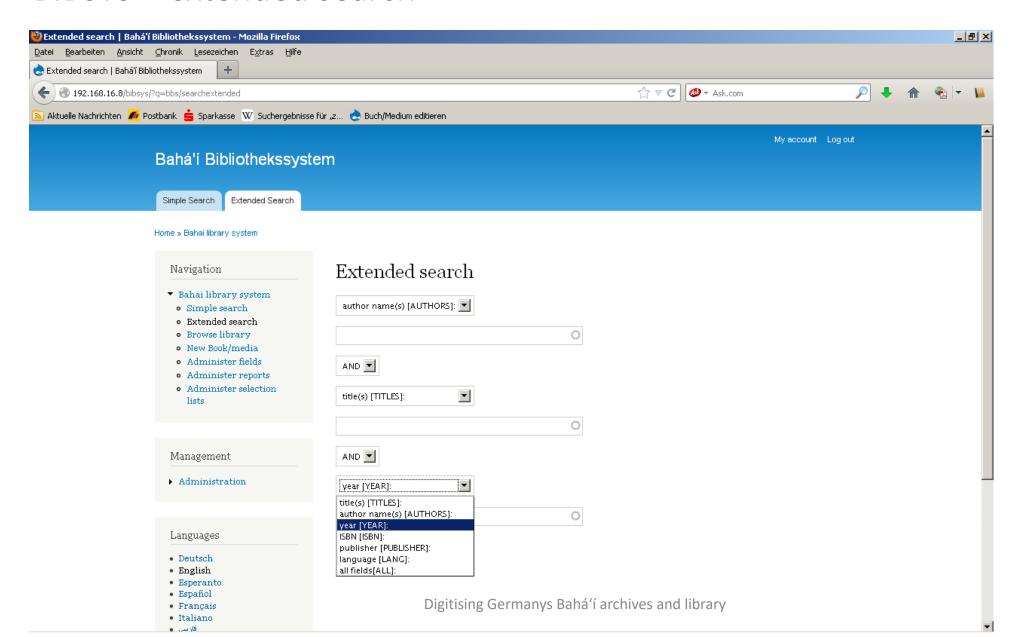
BIBSYS – Log in



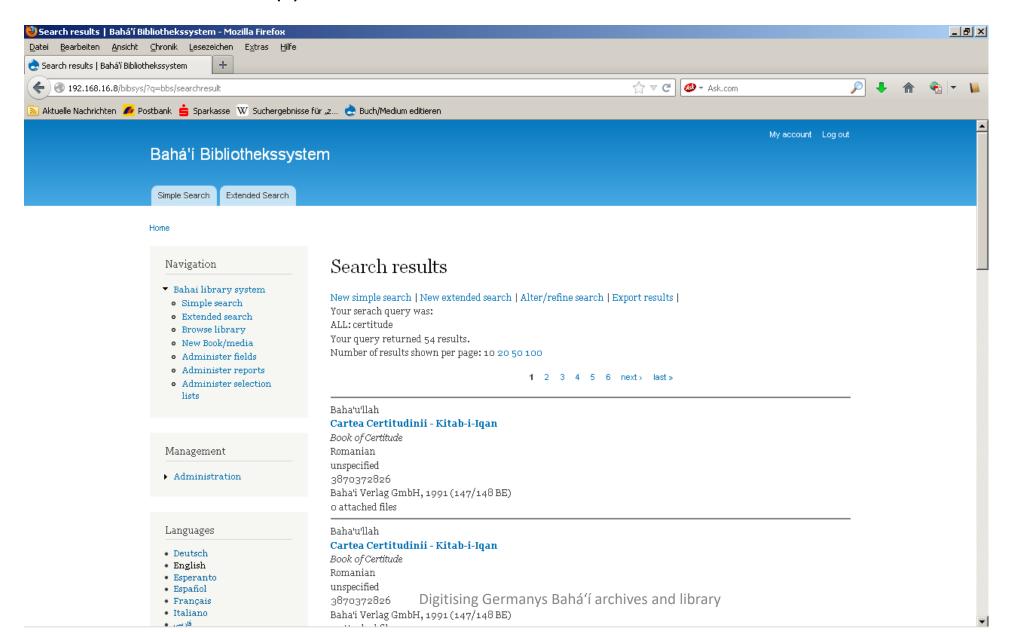
BIBSYS – simple search



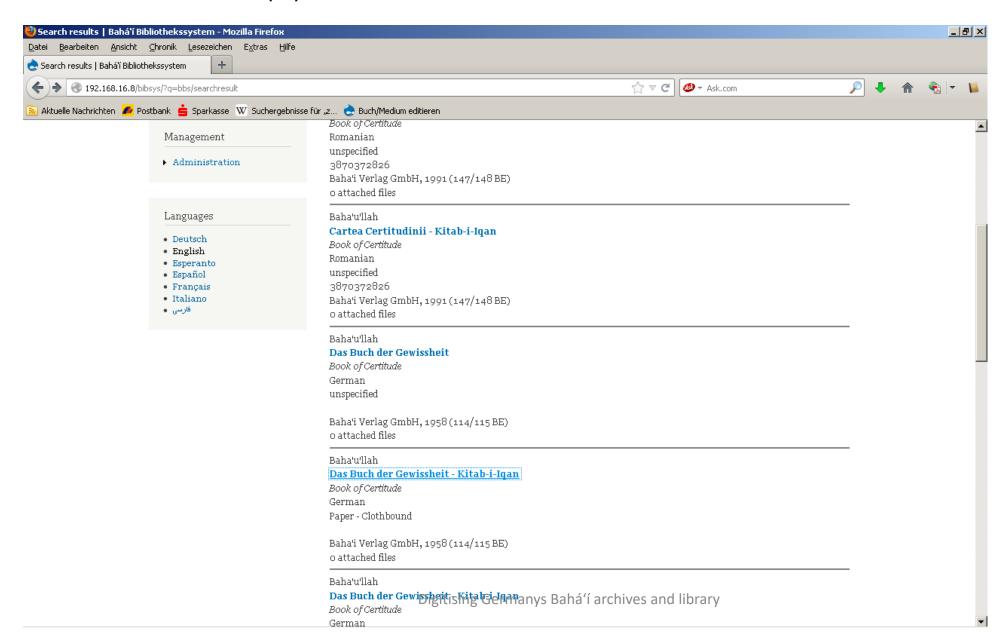
BIBSYS – extended search



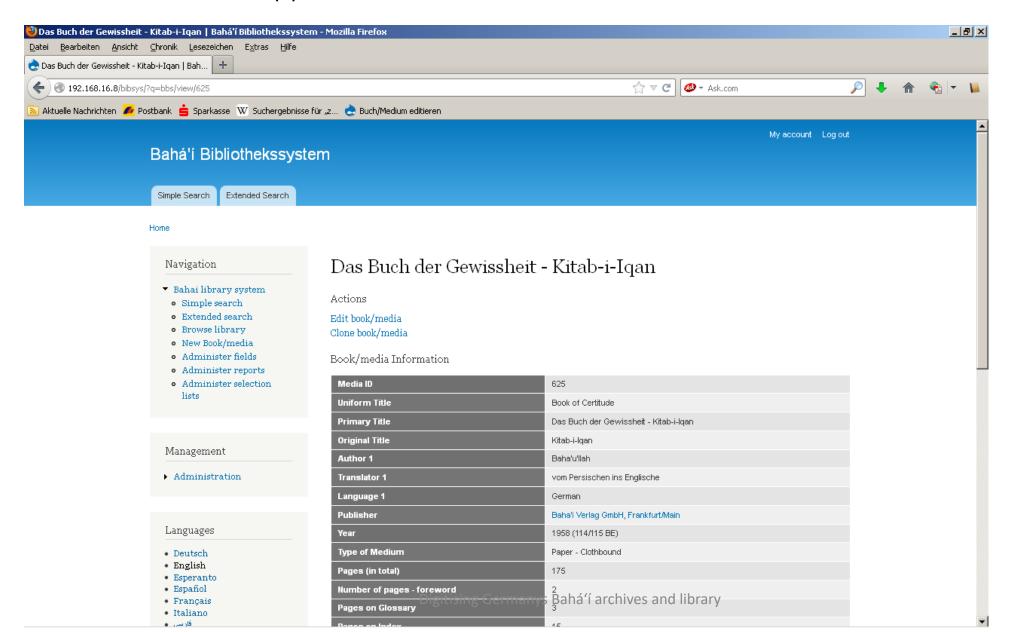
BIBSYS – results (I)



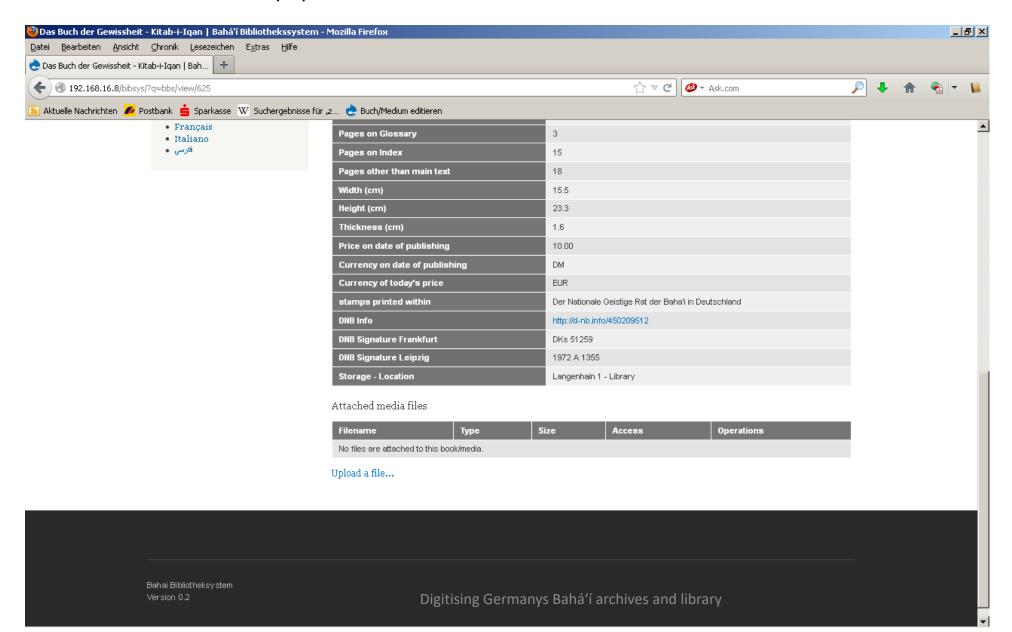
BIBSYS - results (II)



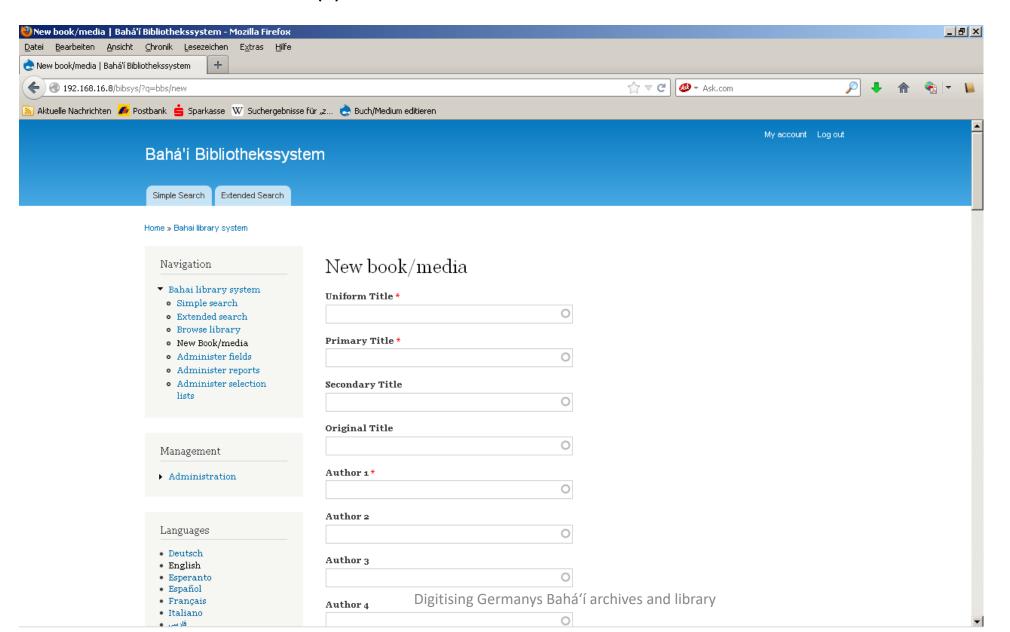
BIBSYS – details (I)



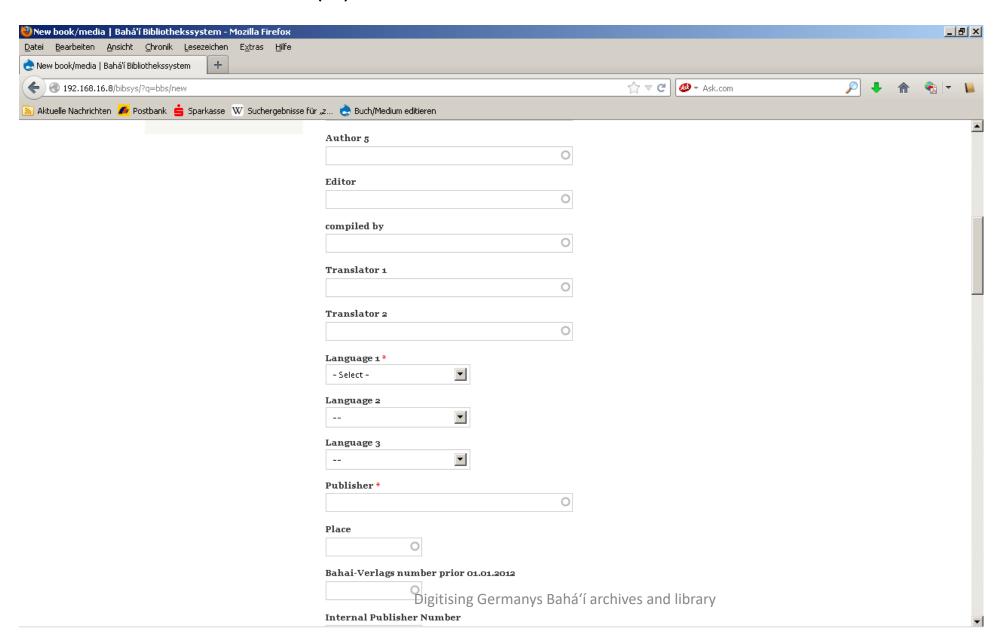
BIBSYS – details (II)



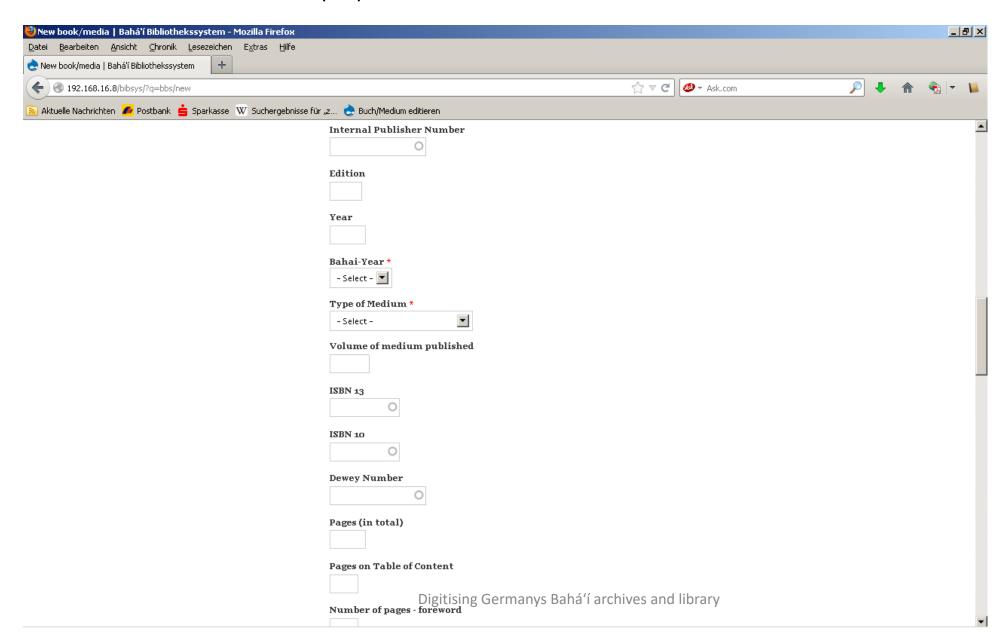
BIBSYS – attributes (I)



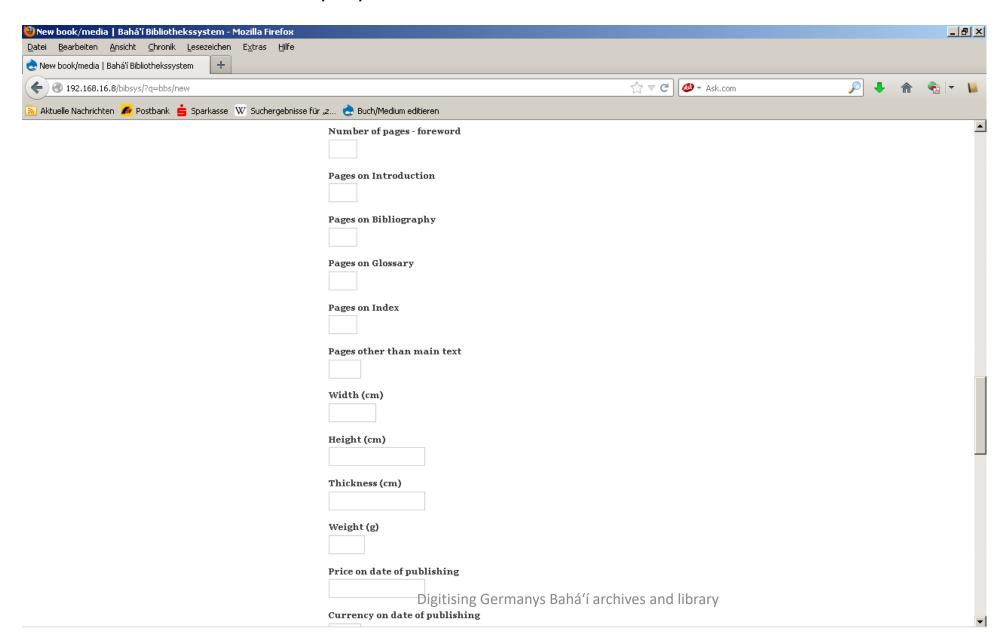
BIBSYS – attributes (II)



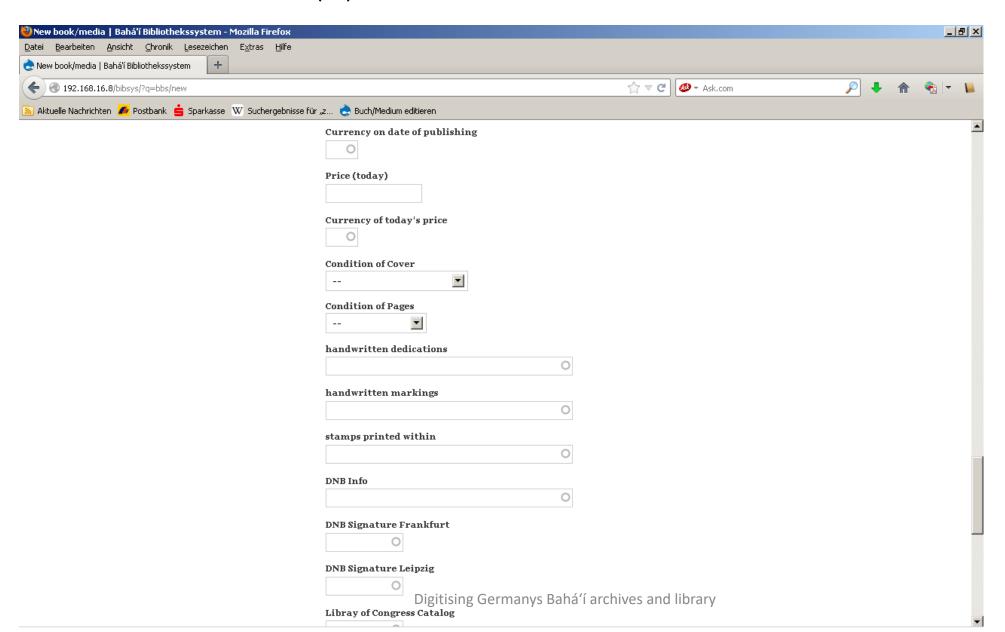
BIBSYS – attributes (III)



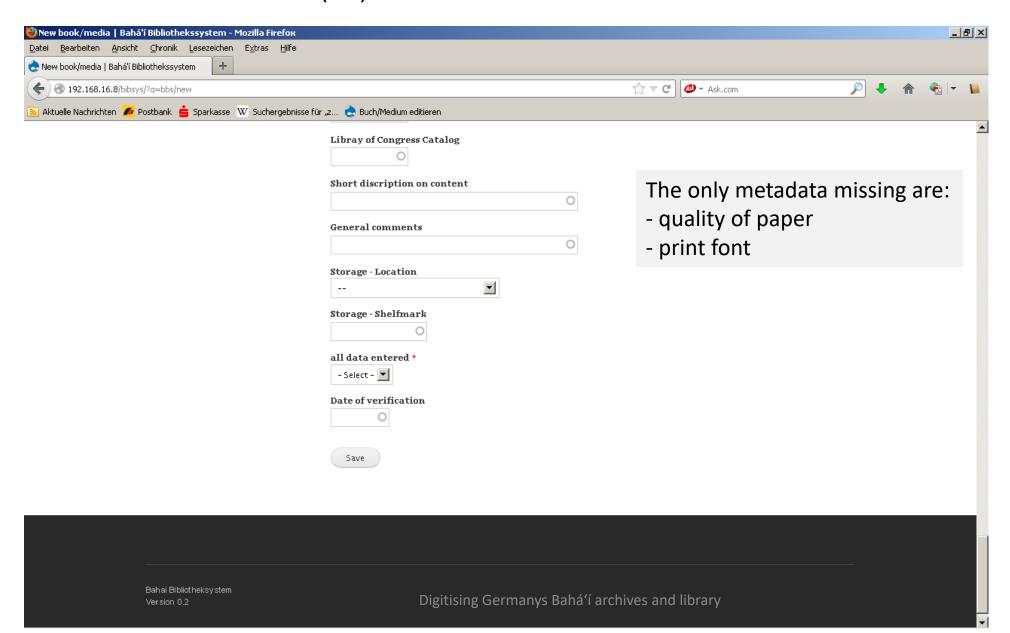
BIBSYS – attributes (IV)



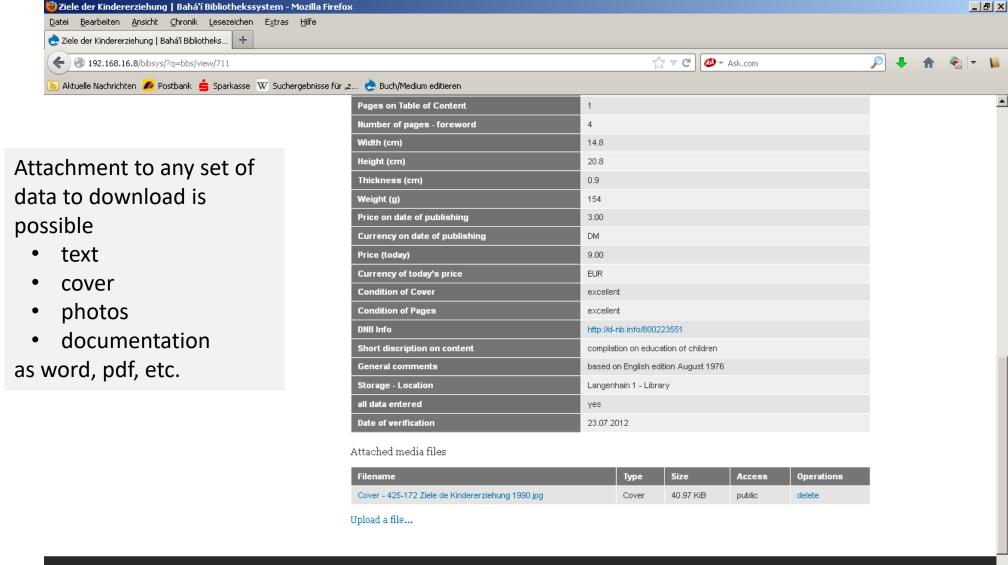
BIBSYS – attributes (V)



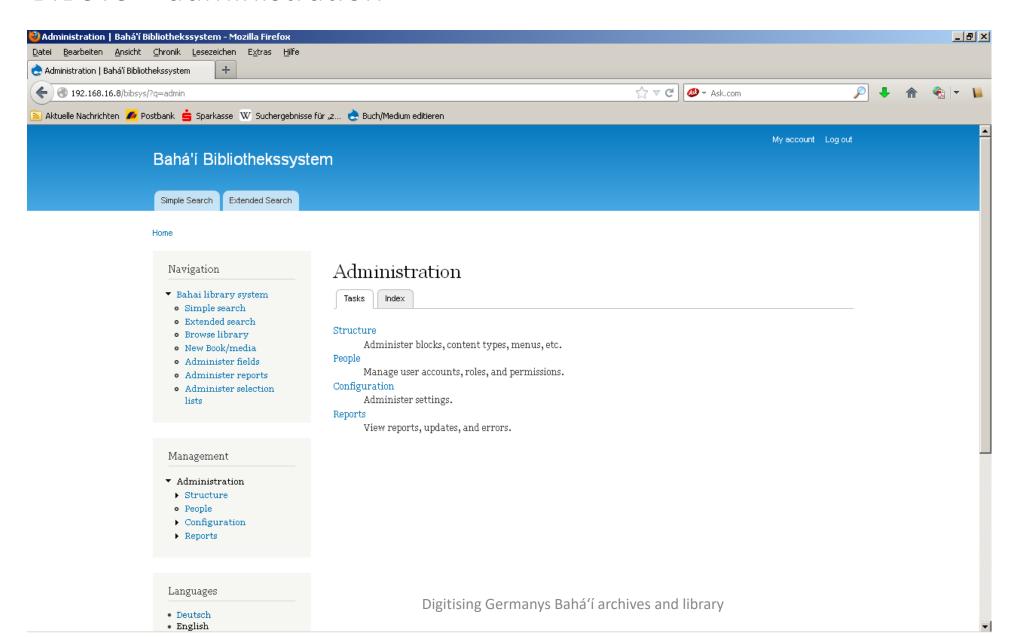
BIBSYS – attributes (VI)



BIBSYS – attachments



BIBSYS – administration



How I have got there (V)

ARCHIVSYS (archival system)

technically speaking, a copy of BIBSYS with adapted to demands of the archivist

- > same server
- same software
- same operational functions
- different fields to fill in metadata

How I have got there (VI)

2013 till today

I-study

- my own *BIBSYS*
- will cease to exist in due course, as there is no demand

Bahá'í collection

- taking over Bahá'í books, journals, photos, audio-visual material for private use from any source and any place
- buying new issues of German Bahá'í publications from either publishing trust

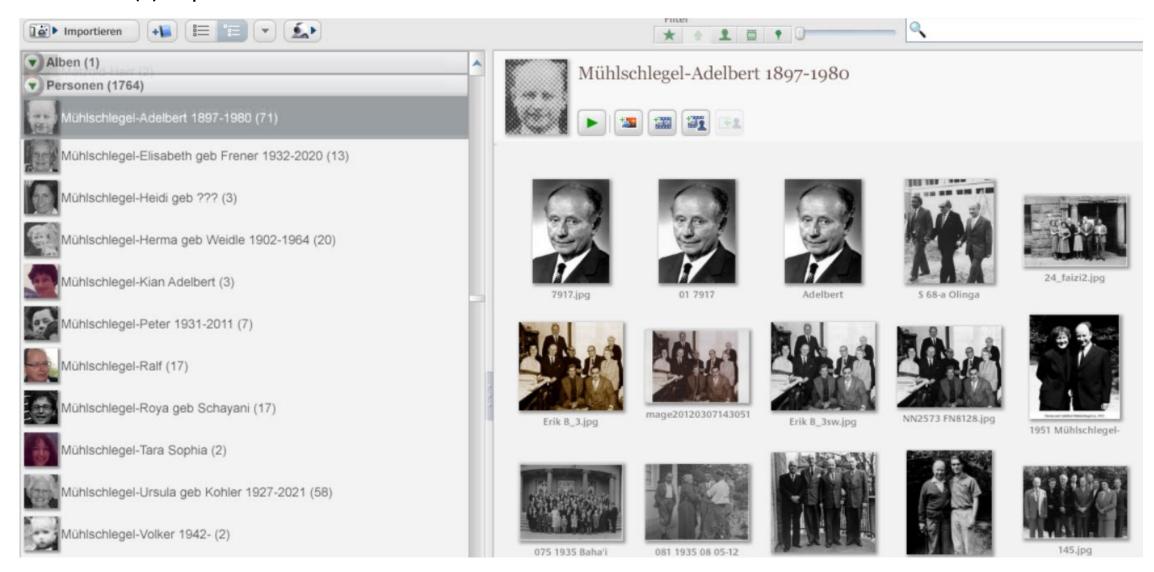
How I have got there (VII)

2013 till today (cont.)

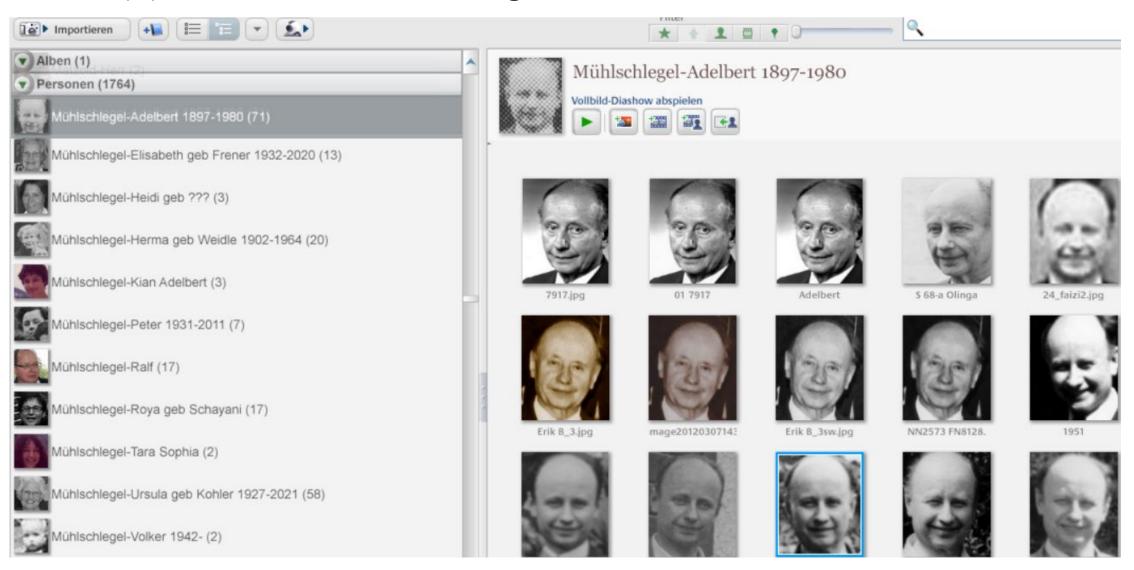
Bahá'ís

- still identifying Bahá'í on photos by PICASA and PAF

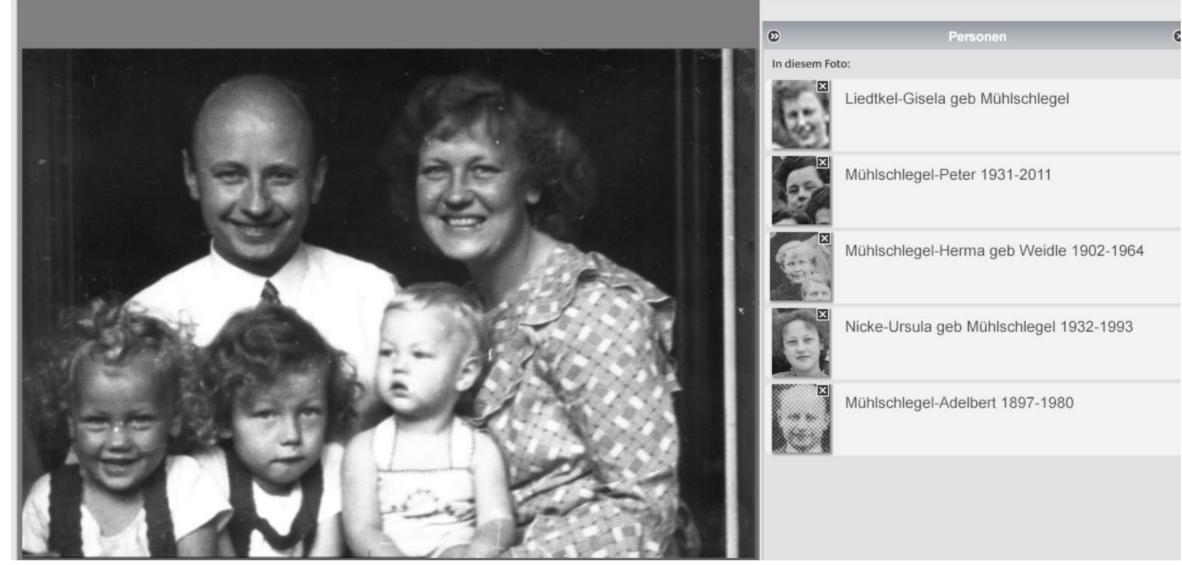
Picasa (I) - photos



Picasa (II) – and thereof the recoginition of faces



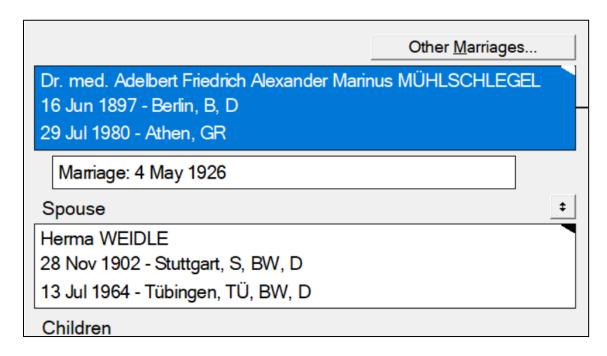
Picasa (III) – recoginition of faces



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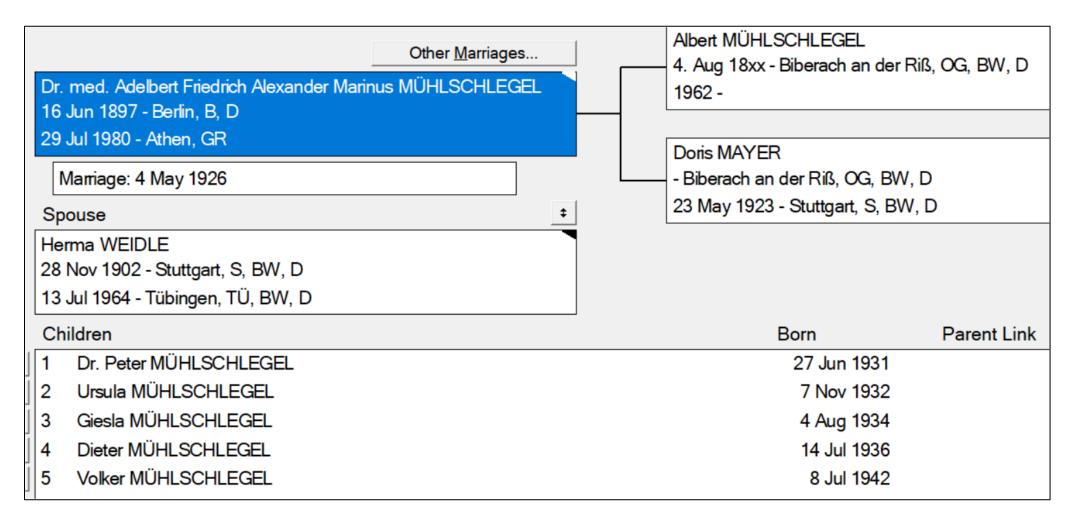
PAF (I)

Database dedicated to ancestry, now adapted to Bahá'ís in Germany



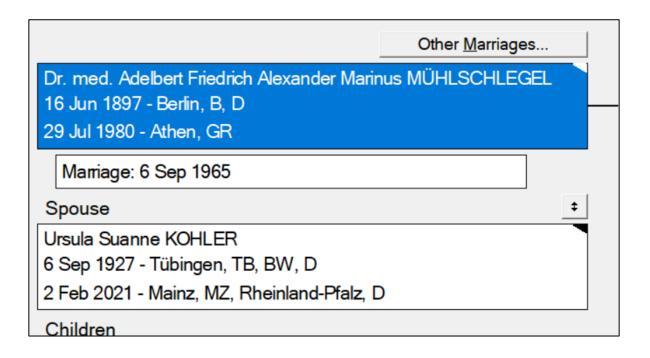
PAF (I)

Database dedicated to ancestry, now adapted to Bahá'ís in Germany

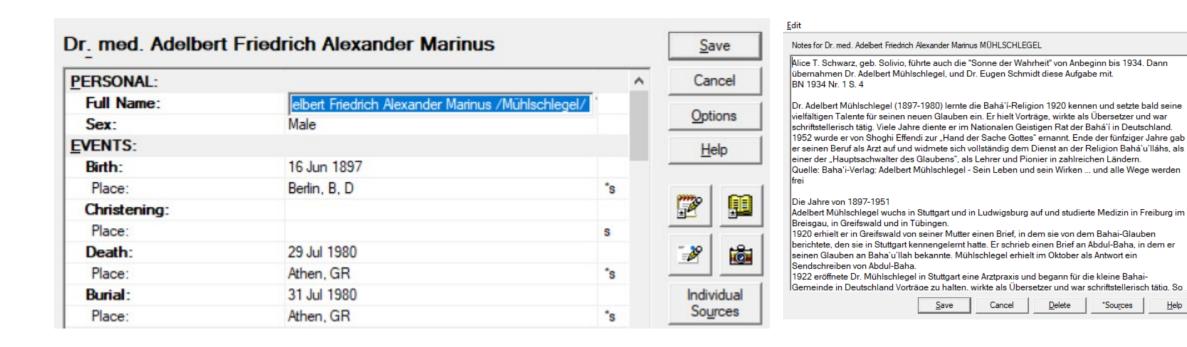


PAF (I)

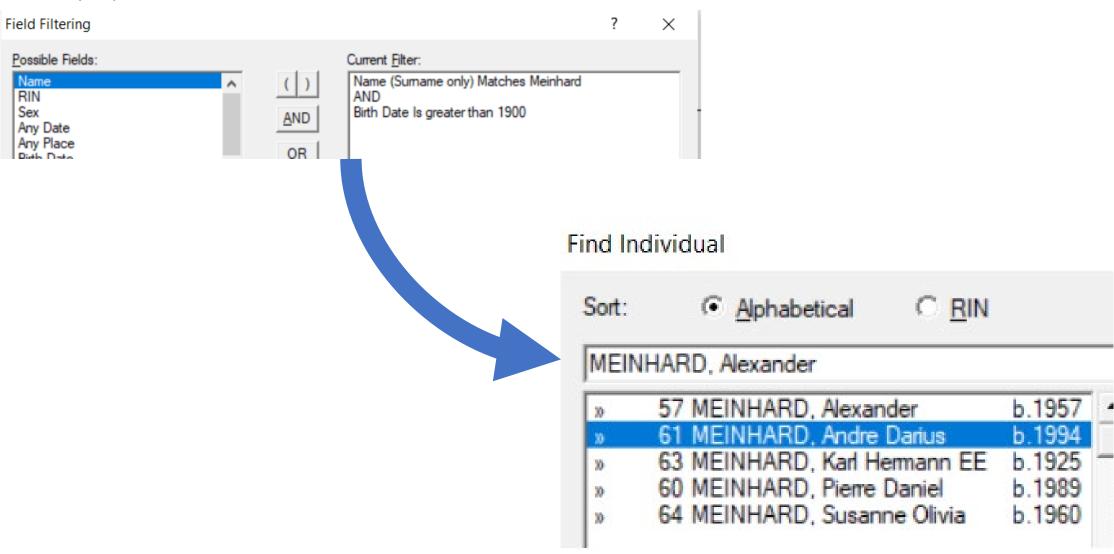
Database dedicated to ancestry, now adapted to Bahá'ís in Germany



PAF (II)



PAF (III)



Prospects

- further digitising
 - > Dr. Hermann Grossmann Archive (target end -> Dec. 2024)
- > continuation of the *Historic series*
 - > Tablet to Prof. Forel (2022)
 - ➤ Bahá'í speeches 1945-1950
 - > Dr. Hermann Grossmann's *Grundrisse* and *Studienhefte* (Ruhi-course 0.0)
 - > The Bahá'í Administration in Germany as is
 - > The who is who of German Bahá'ís (1905-1937)
 - > The German Bahá'í History (1905-?)
 - > Translation of Vol. 1 (Fallscheer)
 - > updates of Vol. 1 and 2

Q&A

Thank you very much for your interest