B4M36DS2, BE4M36DS2: **Database Systems 2**

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Lecture 11

Graph Databases: Neo4j: Cypher

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Lecture Outline

Graph databases

- Introduction

Neo4j

- Data model: **property graphs**
- **Traversal framework**
- **Cypher** query language
  - Read, write, and general clauses

Neo4j Graph Database

Sample Data

Sample graph with **movies and actors**

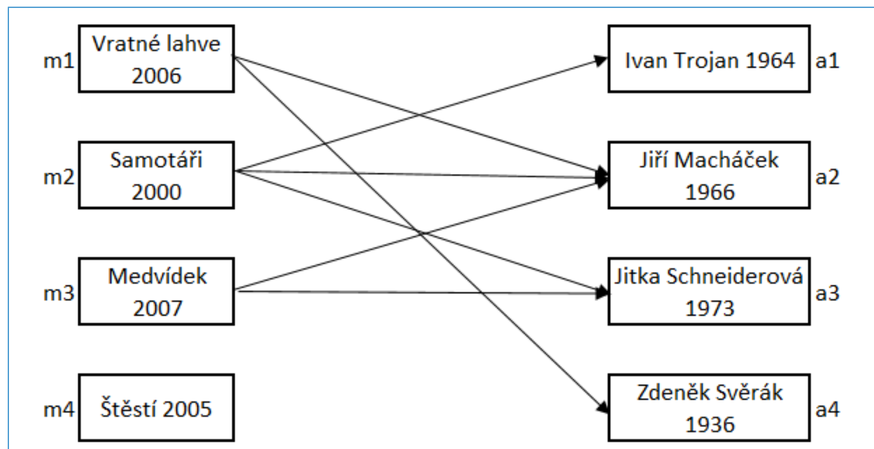
```
(m1:MOVIE { id: "vratnelahve", title: "Vratné lahve", year: 2006 })
(m2:MOVIE { id: "samotari", title: "Samotáři", year: 2000 })
(m3:MOVIE { id: "medvidek", title: "Medvídek", year: 2007 })
(m4:MOVIE { id: "stesti", title: "Štěstí", year: 2005 })

(a1:ACTOR { id: "trojan", name: "Ivan Trojan", year: 1964 })
(a2:ACTOR { id: "machacek", name: "Jiří Macháček", year: 1966 })
(a3:ACTOR { id: "schneiderova", name: "Jitka Schneiderová", year: 1973 })
(a4:ACTOR { id: "sverak", name: "Zdeněk Svěrák", year: 1936 })

(m1)-[c1:PLAY { role: "Robert Landa" }]->(a2)
(m1)-[c2:PLAY { role: "Josef Tkaloun" }]->(a4)
(m2)-[c3:PLAY { role: "Ondřej" }]->(a1)
(m2)-[c4:PLAY { role: "Jakub" }]->(a2)
(m2)-[c5:PLAY { role: "Hanka" }]->(a3)
(m3)-[c6:PLAY { role: "Ivan" }]->(a1)
(m3)-[c7:PLAY { role: "Jirka", award: "Czech Lion" }]->(a2)
```

Sample Data

Sample graph with **movies and actors**



Cypher

Cypher

Cypher

- Declarative **graph query language**
  - Allows for expressive and efficient querying and updates
  - Inspired by SQL (query clauses) and SPARQL (pattern matching)
- **OpenCypher**
  - Ongoing project aiming at Cypher standardization
  - http://www.opencypher.org/

Clauses

- E.g. `MATCH`, `RETURN`, `CREATE`, …
- Clauses can be (almost arbitrarily) **chained together**
  - Intermediate result of one clause is passed to a subsequent one

Sample Query

Find names of actors who played in *Medvídek* movie

```
MATCH(m:MOVIE)-[r:PLAY]->(a:ACTOR)
  WHERE m.title = "Medvídek"
RETURN a.name, a.year
  ORDER BY a.year
```

a.name	a.year
Ivan Trojan	1964
Jiří Macháček	1966

Clauses

Read clauses and their sub-clauses

- `MATCH` – specifies graph patterns to be searched for
  - `WHERE` – adds additional filtering constraints
- …

Write clauses and their sub-clauses

- `CREATE` – creates new nodes or relationships
- `DELETE` – deletes nodes or relationships
- `SET` – updates labels or properties
- `REMOVE` – removes labels or properties
- …

Clauses

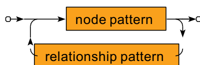
General clauses and their sub-clauses

- `RETURN` – defines what the query result should contain
  - `ORDER BY` – describes how the query result should be ordered
  - `SKIP` – excludes certain number of solutions from the result
  - `LIMIT` – limits the number of solutions to be included
- `WITH` – allows query parts to be chained together
- …

Path Patterns

Path pattern expression

- **Sequence of interleaved node and relationship patterns**
- Describes a single path (not a general subgraph)



- ASCII-Art inspired syntax
  - Circles () for nodes
  - Arrows <--, --, --> for relationships

Path Patterns

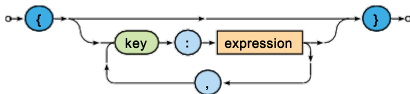
Node pattern

- Matches one data node

- **Variable**
  - Allows us to access a given node later on
- Set of **labels**
  - Data node must have **all the specified labels** to be matched
- **Property** map
  - Data node must have **all the requested properties** (including their values) to be matched (the order is unimportant)

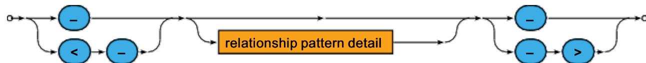
Path Patterns

Property map



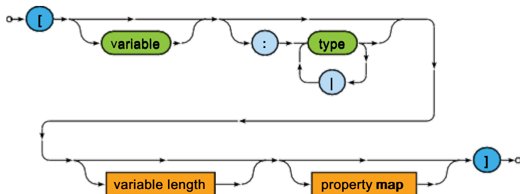
Relationship pattern

- Matches one data relationship



Path Patterns

Relationship pattern

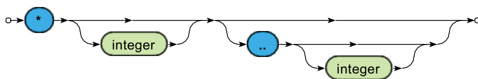


- **Variable**
  - Allows us to access a given node later on
- Set of **types**
  - Data relationship must be of **one of the enumerated types** to be matched

Path Patterns

Relationship pattern (*cont.*)

- **Property** map
  - Data relationship must have **all the requested properties**
- Variable path **length**
  - Allows us to match **paths of arbitrary lengths** (not just exactly one relationship)



  - Examples: `*`, `*4`, `*2..6`, `*..6`, `*2..`

Path Patterns

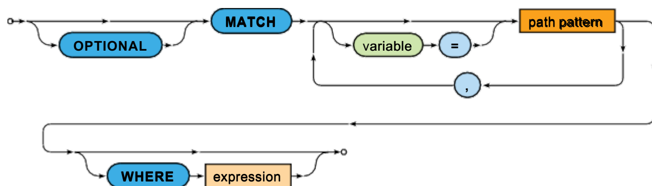
Examples

()
(x)--(y)
(m:MOVIE)-->(a:ACTOR)
(:MOVIE)-->(a { name: "Ivan Trojan" })
()<-[r:PLAY]-()
(m)-[:PLAY { role: "Ivan" }]->()
(:ACTOR { name: "Ivan Trojan" })-[:KNOW *2]->(:ACTOR)
()-[:KNOW *5..]->(f)

Match Clause

MATCH clause

- Allows to search for **sub-graphs of the data graph** that match the provided path pattern / patterns (all of them)
  - **Query result** (table) = unordered **set of solutions**
  - One solution (row) = set of **variable bindings**
- Each variable has to be bound



Match Clause

WHERE sub-clause may provide additional constraints

- These constraints are **evaluated directly during the matching phase** (i.e. not after it)
- Typical usage
  - Boolean
  - expressions
  - Comparisons
  - Path patterns – `true` if at least one solution is found

    …

Match Clause: Example

Find names of actors who played with *Ivan Trojan* in any movie

```
MATCH(i:ACTOR)<-[:PLAY]-(m:MOVIE)-[:PLAY]->(a:ACTOR)
  WHERE (i.name = "Ivan Trojan")
RETURN a.name
```

```
MATCH(i:ACTOR { name: "Ivan Trojan" })
        <-[:PLAY]-(m:MOVIE)-[:PLAY]->
      (a:ACTOR)
RETURN a.name
```

i	m	a
(a1)	(m2)	(a2)
(a1)	(m2)	(a3)
(a1)	(m3)	(a2)

⇒

a.name
Jiří Macháček
Jitka Schneiderová
Jiří Macháček

Match Clause

Uniqueness requirement

- One data node may match several query nodes, but one data relationship may not match several query relationships

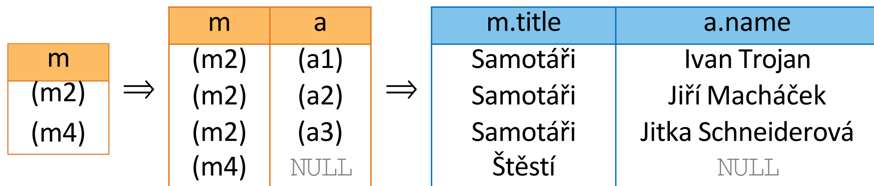
OPTIONAL MATCH

- Attempts to find matching data sub-graphs as usual…
- but **when no solution is found**,
  one specific solution with **all the variables bound to NULL** is generated
- Note that
  either the whole pattern is matched, or nothing is matched

Match Clause: Example

Find movies filmed in *2005* or earlier and names of their actors (if any)

```
MATCH(m:MOVIE)
  WHERE (m.year <= 2005)
OPTIONAL MATCH(m)-[:PLAY]->(a:ACTOR)
RETURN m.title, a.name
```



m
(m2)
(m4)

⇒

m	a
(m2)	(a1)
(m2)	(a2)
(m2)	(a3)
(m4)	NULL

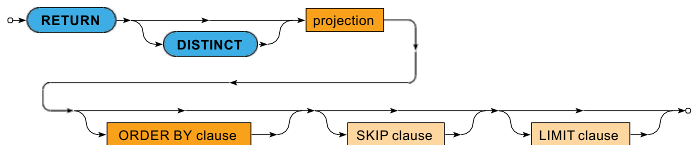
⇒

m.title	a.name
Samotáři	Ivan Trojan
Samotáři	Jiří Macháček
Samotáři	Jitka Schneiderová
Štěstí	NULL

Return Clause

RETURN clause

- Defines what to include in the query result
  - Projection of variables, properties of nodes or relationships (via dot notation), aggregation functions, …
- Optional `ORDER BY`, `SKIP` and `LIMIT` sub-clauses



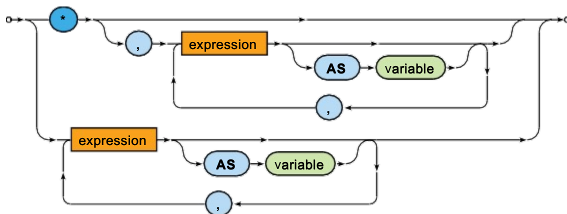
RETURN DISTINCT

- Duplicate solutions (rows) are removed

Return Clause

Projection

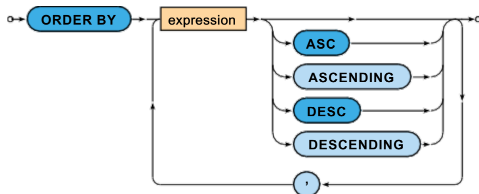
- `*` = **all the variables**
  - Can only be specified as the very first item
- `AS` allows to **explicitly (re)name** output records



Return Clause

ORDER BY sub-clause

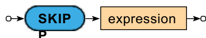
- Defines the **order of solutions** within the query result
  - Multiple criteria can be specified
  - Default direction is `ASC`
- The order is undefined unless explicitly defined
- Nodes and relationships as such cannot be used as criteria



Return Clause

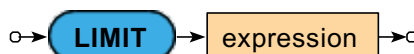
SKIP sub-clause

- Determines the **number of solutions to be skipped** in the query result



LIMIT sub-clause

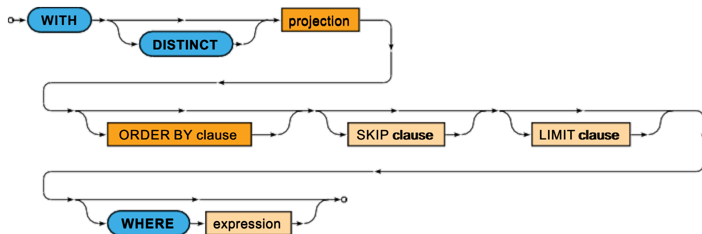
- Determines the **number of solutions to be included** in the query result



With Clause

WITH clause

- **Constructs intermediate result**
  - Analogous behavior to the `RETURN` clause
  - Does not output anything to the user,
    just **forwards the current result to the subsequent clause**
- Optional `WHERE` sub-clause can also be provided



With Clause: Example

Numbers of movies in which actors born in *1965* or later played

```
MATCH(a:ACTOR)
   WHERE (a.year >= 1965)
WITH a, SIZE( (a)<-[:PLAY]-(m:MOVIE)  ) AS  movies
RETURN a.name,
   movies  ORDER BY
   movies ASC
```

a
(a2)
(a3)

⇒

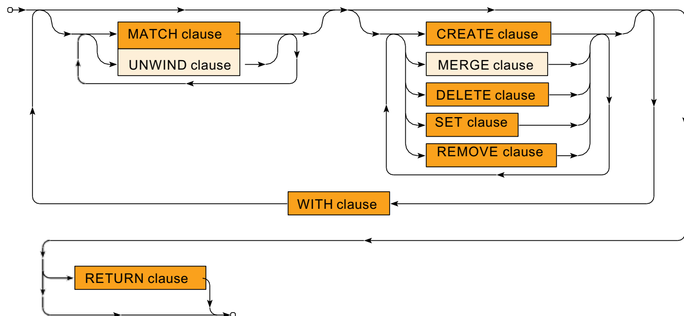
a	movies
(a2)	3
(a3)	1

⇒

a.name	movies
Jitka Schneiderová	1
Jiří Macháček	3

Query Structure

Chaining of Cypher clauses (*simplified*)



- **Read** clauses: MATCH, …
- **Write** clauses: CREATE, DELETE, SET, REMOVE, …

Query Structure

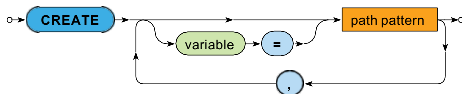
Query parts

- **WITH clauses split the whole query into query parts**
- Certain restrictions apply…
  - **Read clauses** (if any) **must precede write clauses** (if any) in every query part
  - **The last query part must be terminated by a RETURN clause**
    - Unless this part contains at least one write clause
    - I.e. **read-only queries must return data**
  - …

Write Clauses

CREATE clause

- **Inserts new nodes or relationships** into the data graph



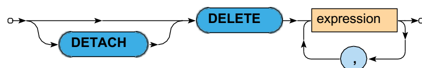
Example

```
MATCH(m:MOVIE { id: "stesti"})
CREATE
   (a:ACTOR { id: "vilhelmova", name: "Tatiana Vilhelmová", year: 1978}),
   (m)-[:PLAY]->(a)
```

Write Clauses

DELETE clause

- **Removes nodes, relationships or paths** from the data graph
- Relationships must always be removed before the nodes they are associated with
  - Unless the `DETACH` modifier is specified



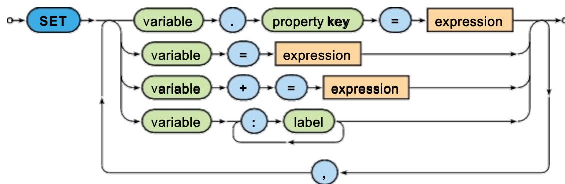
Example

```
MATCH(:MOVIE { id: "stesti"})-[r:PLAY]->(a:ACTOR)
DELETE r
```

Write Clauses

SET clause

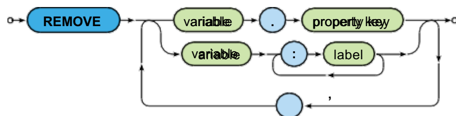
- Allows to…
  - **set a value of a particular property**
    - or remove a property when `NULL` is assigned
  - **replace properties** (all of them) with new ones
  - **add new properties** to the existing ones
  - **add labels** to nodes
- Cannot be used to set relationship types



Write Clauses

REMOVE clause

- Allows to...
  - **remove a particular property**
  - **remove labels** from nodes
- Cannot be used to remove relationship types



Expressions

Literal expressions

- Integers: decimal, octal, hexadecimal
- Floating-point numbers
- Strings
  - Enclosed in double or single quotes
  - Standard escape sequences
- Boolean values: `true`, `false`

- `NULL` value (cannot be stored in data graphs)

Other **expressions**

- Collections, variables, property accessors, function calls, path patterns, boolean expressions, arithmetic expressions, comparisons, regular expressions, predicates, …

Lecture Conclusion

Neo4j = graph database

- **Property graphs**
- **Traversal framework**
  - Path expanders, uniqueness, evaluators, traverser

Cypher = graph query language

- Read (sub-)clauses: `MATCH`, `WHERE`, …
- Write (sub-)clauses: `CREATE`, `DELETE`, `SET`, `REMOVE`, …
- General (sub-)clauses: `RETURN`, `WITH`, `ORDER BY`, `LIMIT`, …