MEI: HOW TO USE

- Preliminary steps:
- 1) Examine the collection: learn as much as possible about the history of the collection so to recognise particular signs and evidence in the books.
- 2) Examine the incunabulum you want to catalogue and start taking notes (on a piece of paper) on all the signs of provenance and try to arrange them consistently and in chronological order.

CREATE A MEI RECORD

- Once you have collected the relevant information on paper, create a record in the following order:
- **FIRST**, work on the '**Owners of Incunabula**' Database (e.g. Smith, John; Oxford, Balliol College, etc.).
- SECOND, create the MEI record for the incunabulum.

OWNERS OF INCUNABULA

 Check the presence, and, if necessary, create new records for the owners in the 'Owners of Incunabula' Database (e.g. Smith, John or Oxford, Balliol College, etc.) BEFORE creating MEI records for the incunabula. The **Owners of Incunabula** database is accessible by clicking on **Datasets** in the bottom menu.

This database is particularly useful because, once you have created a good Owner record, every time you will insert the same provenance in a MEI record it will populate the Provenance Information automatically, saving time and preventing mistakes.





If you wish to **SEARCH** or **EDIT** a record, search for the record in the search tab.

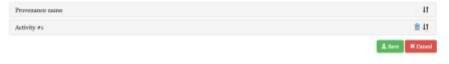
To **CREATE** a record of provenance (person or institution) in the **Owners of Incunabula** database, click on **More** (top menu) and then **Create a new record**.

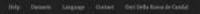




This is how a new record looks in the Owners of Incunabula Database.









In **Provenance Name**, fill in all the relevant information, following the model below. Make sure the information is correct, since, if it is not, it will be repeated in all the records you will create using this provenance!!! **Name format**: **IMPORTANT!** See next slide.



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CONTROLLED LANGUAGE:

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Corporate Name (religious): [City, Order, Dedication, Sigla]. Example: Venice, Benedictines, S. Zacharia, OSB. This is basically the Bod-inc and IPI model, which allows best browsing. **Corporate Name (lay): [City, Name]**. Example: Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana



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In Activity, fill in all the relevant information. Particularly regarding **Dates**, the same principle applies as with MEI records (if incorrect, the machine cannot read them), so follow carefully the MEI guidelines. Add **MARC Area Code** for the country, and **Place** and **GeonamesID** to allow the system to locate the place on the map. Add **Profession /Type of Insitution** and **Characterisation**. Remember, once you are back in the MEI record, to add the **ROLE**, which has to be added manually every time (since it may chance).

Most Owners will have only **1** Activity. In rare cases (e.g. a student who then becomes a lawyer, and we have precise dates) it is possible to have more. Generally speaking, however, best to stick to 1 Activity, listing the dates of birth and death (or foundation/end), either precise or approximate.

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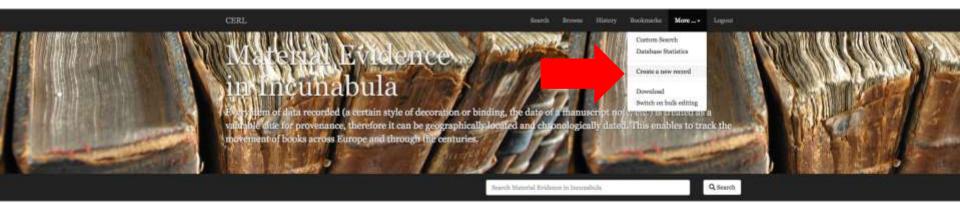
MEI

 Once you have finished inserting all the relevant information in the Owners of Incunabula Database, you are ready to create MEI records. The **Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)** database is accessible by clicking on **Datasets** in the bottom menu.

If you wish to **SEARCH** or **EDIT** a record, search for the record in the search tab.

To **CREATE** a new record:

After Login, click on More and then on Create a new record.



Material Evidence in Incunabula

MEI is a database specifically designed to record and search the material evidence (or only specific, post-production evidence and provenance information) of (gith-centrary printed books: ownership, decordine, binding, measurely a montations, examps, prion, etc. MEI is Enked to the humaleda Short Title Catalogue (1810), provided by the British Library, from which it derives the bibliographical records, and it allows the user at last to combine searches of bibliographical records (or 1873) with copyrapetific records.

Uniquely, every element recorded (a sertain style of decoration or binding, a manuscript note, stc.) is treated as a valuable clus for proventators, therefore it can be goographically incited and threaslogically dated. Sophicit exceeding of the movement of books across Europe and threagh the centuries.

Manuscript notes, equally valuable for understanding the readership of the sarly editions, are classified according to their frequency and their type: corrections, completions, surgelements, extraction of key words, reliation, translation, structuring the text, comments, censorship, reading marks (underfining and pointing hands). These data allow for explainticated social studies on the use of briefs, readorship and reading.

Prices and currencies, fundamentally important to the economic study of the book-trade, are also individually recorded. This will allow a critical mass of evidence to be submitted to the analysis of economic historians.

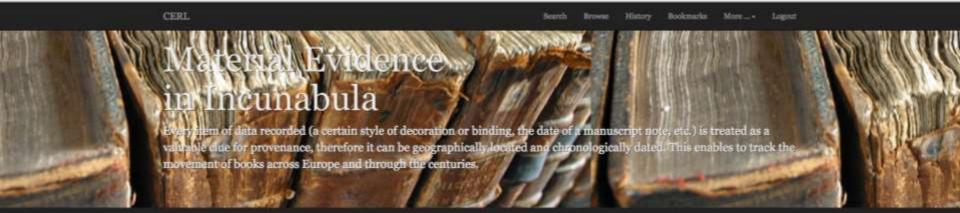
Personal and institutional names of ownership are linked to the CERI. Thesauras, where further his-hibliographical information can be found. In its provides links to other editions identified with the specified name, clarifying whether the owner was also an author, thus merging ownership and authorship information. Provenance locations are also linked to the CERI. Thesaurus, which off em geocoordinates and map locations. MRI is being developed to provide a physical representation of the circulation of books throughout the centuries, from place of production, to their present locations.

For some basic statistics on this database click here

Read more about this database on the CERL Website ...

This is how a new record looks.

The bars **Copy** and **'About this record'** remain unvaried, while **'Evidence #'** can increase for as many blocks of evidence you wish to create. See further on how to create new blocks of evidence. Ignore 'About this record', you will never have to use it. **Start from: COPY.**







G 2015 CONNECTION of European Research Libraries o Newling Green Lane - London EC/R ONE - United Kingdom In **copy** there are a few very important things that need to be completed, and a number of others that are unessential. Of the first three elements, Database segment (ignore), Language (ignore), ISTC N° IS ESSENTIAL (if you do not insert it, you will not be able to retrieve the record!!!). 1) Find your edition on the ISTC website (in another screen!) and copy the ISTC number (eg: ia00067600); 2) Back in MEI, click on SELECT (yellow tab) and paste the ISTC number. 3) Click on the edition that appears.



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Once you have saved, you will see the record as it looks. Scroll to the bottom, and click the **first tab** on the left (square with pen) to **EDIT** the record.

The second tab creates a duplicate of the record, and the third tab (bin) deletes the record. Use the latter with caution!!!

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After you have clicked on Edit, you will get back to this point. Now you are ready to describe the blocks of provenance. Click on '**Evidence #1**'.



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help Datasets Language Contact Geri Della Rocca de Candal



© 2015 Consortium of European Ressanth Libraries o Rewling Green Lane - London ECvR oNE - United Kingdom Since the point of MEI is to tag space and time, this info, when available, is essential, so don't be shy. Write down the **Place** name (e.g. 'Milan'), then click on the yellow tab 'select' – this will open the Geonames window, where you will write 'Milan' again, and then select the appropriate option from the list ('ppl' option is preferable). Repeat with **Area**: click on yellow tab 'select' and insert the country name ('Italy') in the window that will have opened. In both cases add notes if necessary (e.g. if you are not 100% sure it is Milan, but you have good reasons to suppose so – explain why).

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In MEI, time is as important as space (so, again, don't be shy): in Time period, insert either exact dates or approximate dates, but follow carefully the MEI guidelines on how to insert dates (see picture inserted here).
 Next, click on the yellow tab 'Add another Provenance name field' (i.e. DO NOT start filling the Provenance name section). This will open a window: insert the name you are looking for and select it (provided that it is already in the database). This will create and fill a new Provenance name section, under the empty one (which will then be deleted once you save the record). The only part that you always have to complete manually is 'Role' (e.g. present or former owner, binder, etc.).

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PANONYMOUS PROVENANCES

Clearly the majority of provenances are anonymous: we have thus created a number of **records for 'anonymous' provenances** in the Owners of Incunabula database with geographical and chronological boundaries (e.g. Anonymous, Italy [**1475-1525**]). **Please use of them!**

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In **Provenance Note: 1) Provenance type** is essential: select one or more. If you select '**Inscription**', the text of the inscription should be inserted right below, in the '**Note**' field. For all other options (e.g. 'binding', 'stamp', etc.) scroll down to the next sections of this block of evidence.

Pifference between inscription and manuscript notes? An inscription is **ONLY** a note of ownership (e.g. 'ex libris Marci Tullii' or 'This book belongs to Erasmus'). Any other annotation goes under 'manuscript notes'.

Link to Provenance Image (ignore, unless particularly relevant). Date of evidence (ignore, unless particularly relevant).

2) Method of acquisition: important, if known.

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Describe the **Binding** to the best of your knowledge. **Do not hesitate to ask for help identifying it**. If you **cannot** associate a binding to a particular block of provenance that you have already identified (space and time), then the binding requires a specific evidence block, in which the binding alone is described. Please fill in all, or as many binding descriptors as possible. In **Binding note** you can add a brief textual description (e.g. 'brown Russian calf, gilt fleuron'), or copy information from an earlier description.

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Decoration

If the book has **Decoration** or **Rubrication**, please describe it here. Again, as with bindings, if you **cannot** associate a decoration or rubrication to a particular block of provenance that you have already identified (space and time), then these sections require individual, specific evidence block, in which the decoration and/or rubrication alone is described.

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1) Manuscript notes: Tick all the appropriate boxes (e.g. corrections, censorship, etc.) and in **Manuscript notes** you can provide a short textual description of the marginalia (e.g. '16th c. Latin marginalia, brown ink, German hand'). MS notes, if not connected to a specific block of provenance (space and time), should be described separately (e.g. if two anonymous sets of marginalia, two individual blocks of evidence describing the manuscript notes only). Please also describe the **Frequency** and **Location in Book** (useful to understand reading practices).

2) Stamps: describe, if any (same principle applies regarding provenance: if a stamp is the sole evidence of a prov., describe separately. If not, it goes together with the block of provenance it belongs to, e.g. 'Bodleian Library').

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Following the same principles described above on how to ascribe evidence to a new block of evidence, or a single one containing multiple evidence, describe the presence of **Historic Shelfmarks**, if any (enquire about the **Shelfmark pattern n**°, if necessary). If the **price** of the book, in one of its passages of ownership, is known, complete the information here, e.g. 10; GBP; (in **notes**) 'Price inscribed in pencil on the front pastedown'.

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The final step in completing a block of evidence involves stating: **1)** The **Certainty** of the evidence. Usually, unless highly dubious, one can consider the described evidence almost invariably certain.

2) The **Source** of the evidence (**essential**) – i.e. where does the information come from? From the examination of the copy ('Book in hand'), from a catalogue, a bibliography...etc?

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At this point the description of a block of evidence is **complete**.

If you wish to create a new block of evidence, you have two ways:

1) You immediately click on the blue tab 'Add another empty Evidence Field'.

2) You save the record (green tab), follow slides 19, 20 and 21 again, open the last evidence block created, scroll down to the end of the block, and click on the **blue tab** 'Add another empty Evidence Field'.

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Either way, once you have clicked on the **blue tab** 'Add another empty Evidence Field', the new block of evidence will appear right under the blue tab.

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