

Which records are in MEI?

- Provenance information extracted from published catalogues. This will allow for an integrated search on all information already available on copy specific of incunabula, currently scattered across hundreds of published catalogues.
- MEI offers a dedicated space to record the material evidence of the vast number of incunabula which today remain described only bibliographically: there are well over 4,000 locations with incunabula registered in ISTC.
- MEI is currently available in an English and Italian interface. Translations into other languages are being prepared.

For further information please contact Dr Cristina Dondi, Secretary of CERL, at c.dondi@cerl.org

English:

<http://incunabula.cerl.org/cgi-bin/search.pl?lang=en>

Italian:

<http://incunabula.cerl.org/cgi-bin/search.pl?lang=it>

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www.cerl.org

Finsbury Business Centre
40 Bowling Green Lane, Clerkenwell
London EC1R 0NE

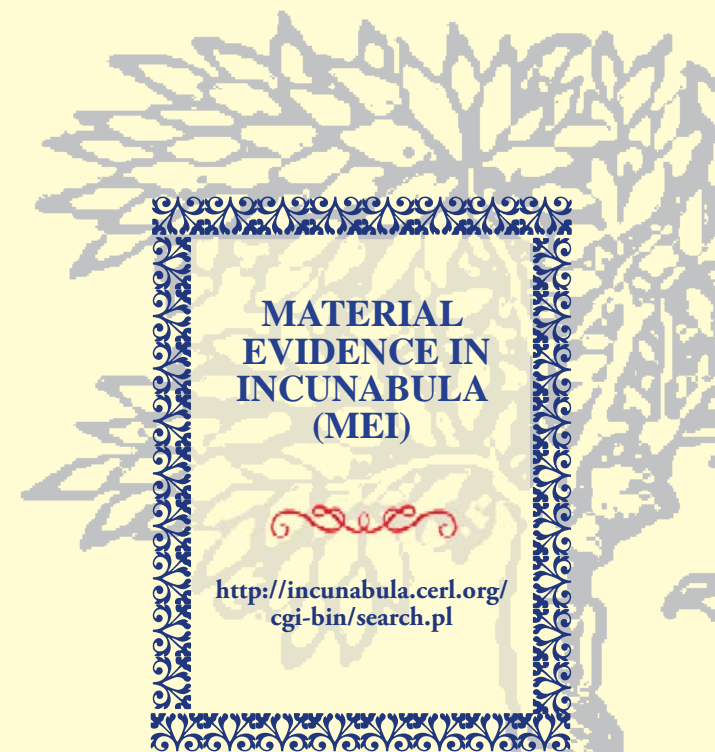
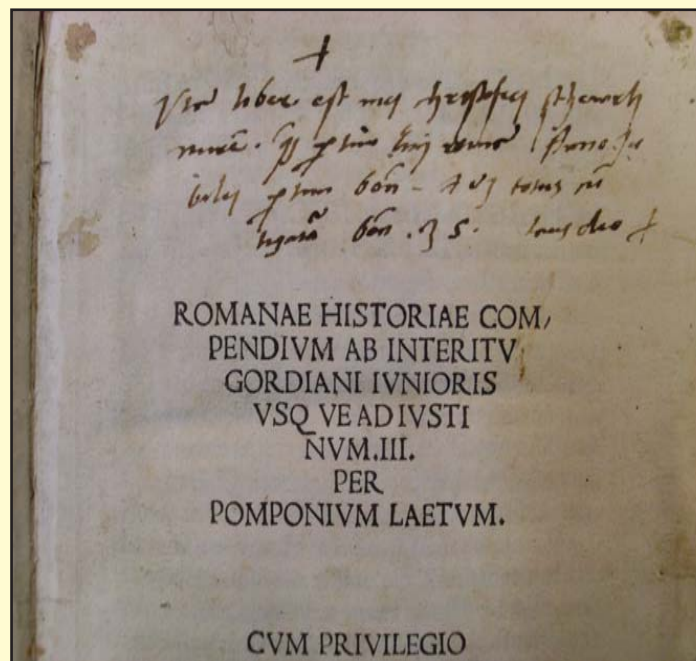
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Questions MEI can address

- Reconstruction of dispersed collections
- Assessing the survival of our printed heritage
- Economic History: the book-trade in the 15th century, distribution and prices
- History of collecting / history of libraries from the 15th century to the present
- Pattern of acquisitions and of collection formation
- Social history, ownership of books
- History of reading, readership and the use of books
- Philology
- Intellectual history / circulation of ideas
- Census investigation / history of editions
- History of censorship



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Material Evidence in Incunabula

MEI is a database specifically designed to record and search the material evidence (or copy specific, post-production evidence, provenance information) of 15th-century printed books: ownership, decoration, binding, manuscript annotations, stamps, prices, etc.

MEI is linked to the Incunabula Short-Title Catalogue (ISTC), from which it derives the bibliographical records, and it allows the user at last to combine search of bibliographical records (extracted from ITSC) with copy-specific records.

Uniquely, every item of data recorded (a certain style of decoration or binding, the date of a manuscript note, etc) is treated as a valuable clue for provenance, therefore it can be geographically located and chronologically dated. Explicit ownership notes are further categorised as private or institutional, religious or lay, female or male, and by profession. This enables to track the movement of books across Europe and through the centuries.

Manuscript notes, are classified according to their frequency and their type: corrections, completions, supplements, extraction of key words, collation, translation, structuring the text, comments, censorship, reading marks (underlining and pointing hands).

Personal and institutional names of ownership are linked to the CERL Thesaurus of Provenance names, where further bio-bibliographical information can be found.

Provenance locations are linked to the CERL Thesaurus of Place names, which offers geo-coordinates and map locations. MEI is being developed to provide a physical representation of the circulation of books throughout the centuries, from place of production, to their present locations.

MEI was created by Cristina Dondi, University of Oxford and Secretary of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL), and developed by Alexander Jahnke of Data Conversion Group, University of Göttingen, with funds from the British Academy granted to Dondi and Nigel Palmer. It is hosted by CERL, and freely available on its website.

How to contribute?

Contribution of records is free and welcome. Records are being inserted at the moment by a number of libraries. Once in MEI records can be downloaded in Marc21 or Unimarc Holdings for integration into local OPACs.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Material Evidence in Incunabula - Windows Internet Explorer". The address bar contains the URL: <http://incunabula.cerl.org/cgi-bin/record.pl?rid=100023000©=02000344>. The browser's Favorites bar shows "Material Evidence in Incunabula". The main content area displays the following information:

Oxford, Bodleian Library [Oxford Bodley]

Shelfmark: Auct. O inf. 1.31(3)

Bound with: Julius Pomponius Laetus: De Romanorum magistratibus. – [Bologna : Benedictus Hectoris, after 1497]

Bound with: Julius Pomponius Laetus: Romanae historiae compendium. – Venice : Bernardinus Venetus, de Vitalibus, 23 Apr. 1499

Copy Id: 02000344

Size of Leaves: 212mm x 149mm

Sources: Bod-inc L-018
The recording of this copy's provenance is complete. Last change: 2010-10-18, 13:36:06

Provenance

Place: Bologna (CERL Thesaurus: [gn100007664](#))

Time Period: 15th cent., last decade to 16th cent., 4th decade

Owner: Christoph Scheurl, 1481-1542 (from Nuremberg) (CERL Thesaurus: [gnp01239813](#)) (male; no characterisation; student)
Former Owner

Type of Prov.: Inscription

Note: On a1r of item 1: Iste liber est mei christoferi schewrlj nure[nbergensis] quod partim emi rome anno iubilei partim bon[onie] et v[alet] totus cum ligatura bon[oninorum] 35. Laus deo.
Method of acquisition: purchase

Binding: The original binding was probably prepared by Benedictus Hectoris of Bologna, binder-printer and bookbinder.