Consortium *of* European Research Libraries

Provenance information and authority control

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In December 2004 the Folger Library proposed on the ExLibris rare book discussion list that it might be a good idea to use MARC21 field 720 to record unverified names from provenance information.

This proposal initiated a discussion within CERL's Advisory Task Group, as CERL has during the last few years turned its focus more and more towards the importance of provenance information. The question, in short, is: should unverified names or signatures from provenance notes be controlled in authority records or only in one of the name fields in the bibliographic record?

My own answer is that this should be done in authority records.

My deliberations, before coming to this conclusion, start with the cataloguing situation on the one hand and the research purposes which provenance data should meet on the other hand. Provenance information may consist of many different things: a name in full or partly in full (that is, at least the family name in full); signatures; coats of arms; shelf marks or other kind of codes, the meaning of which may be obscure.

I limit my discussion to personal names and signatures. Names may or may not be verifiable in generally available sources. Quite often they are not verifiable, at least not in practical terms. I mean, a Swedish name may be resolvable for a Swedish cataloguer with a good knowledge of Swedish sources. Such sources may have a narrow scope, e.g. the people of a certain standing in a specific city during a limited time span, and they may be published in earlier centuries and not easily available even in Sweden. To assume that e.g. a cataloguer in an Italian library would be able to trace such a name is quite unrealistic, and vice versa.

Is it of any importance, to trace the names of persons that are not to be found in generally available sources? They cannot be assumed to belong to the great figures of history on which study after study has been, and will be, written. It is quite possible, however, that an Italian owner's name in a book in a Swedish library might belong to a person who is, if not of international, maybe of national importance, in Italy or in Sweden, respectively.

Signatures pose a more difficult problem. If a signature cannot be resolved it is impossible to deduce the nationality. If you have a signature on a Swedish book in a Swedish library, it is probably safe to assume that the owner was a Swede, but in other cases it is impossible to know anything about it. Still, if it is possible to draw on information registered in different records and in different libraries, it might be possible to resolve such signatures if the data can be pulled together.
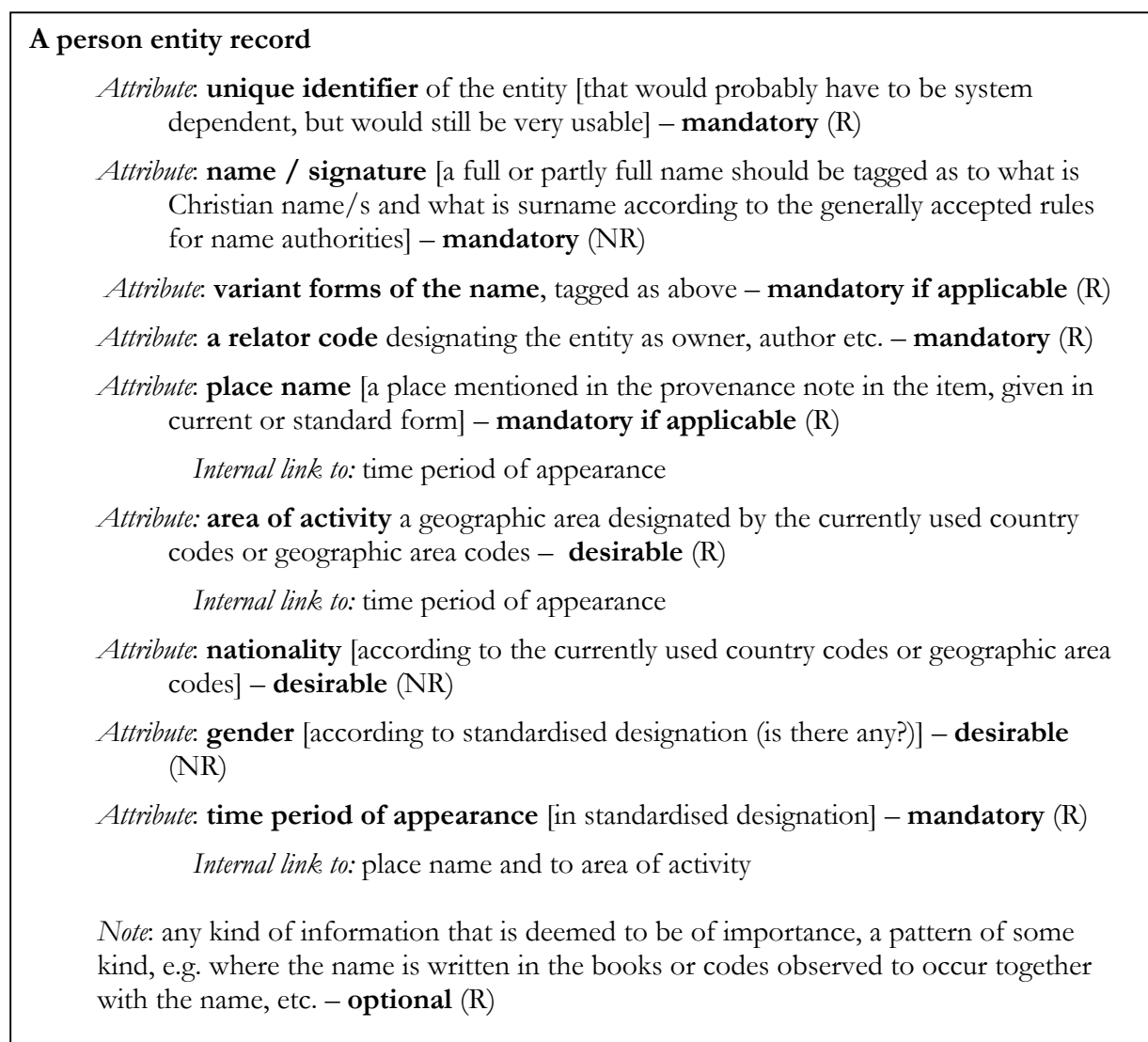
At a more general level, it is of interest to know that a copy of a certain book, printed in Venice in the 16th century was owned by someone in Sweden in the 17th century. Actually, the area of purchase may be of more interest than the identity or nationality of the owner. Dr Bettina Wagner (Bavarian State Library, Munich) gave a presentation at CERL's Annual Seminar in Edinburgh in November 2004 that bears ample witness to the research potential offered by such

information ('The world's largest collection of incunables and their provenances', in: *Books and their owners: provenance information and the European cultural heritage*, CERL Papers V, (London 2005)).

Whether a library is able to prioritize provenance information in specific cataloguing projects is another matter, but it stands to reason that there should be internationally agreed guidelines on how to deal with names in provenance notes, verifiable or unverifiable.

My conclusion is that unverifiable owners' names are entities of importance, but most important are the attributes of such entities: area of purchase or activity, nationality, dates or an estimation of the period of time – and, if possible to establish, gender.

Putting it another way, it would be desirable to have provenance name information structured as shown in Figure 1.

A person entity record

Attribute: **unique identifier** of the entity [that would probably have to be system dependent, but would still be very usable] – **mandatory** (R)

Attribute: **name / signature** [a full or partly full name should be tagged as to what is Christian name/s and what is surname according to the generally accepted rules for name authorities] – **mandatory** (NR)

Attribute: **variant forms of the name**, tagged as above – **mandatory if applicable** (R)

Attribute: **a relator code** designating the entity as owner, author etc. – **mandatory** (R)

Attribute: **place name** [a place mentioned in the provenance note in the item, given in current or standard form] – **mandatory if applicable** (R)

    Internal link to: time period of appearance

Attribute: **area of activity** a geographic area designated by the currently used country codes or geographic area codes – **desirable** (R)

    Internal link to: time period of appearance

Attribute: **nationality** [according to the currently used country codes or geographic area codes] – **desirable** (NR)

Attribute: **gender** [according to standardised designation (is there any?)] – **desirable** (NR)

Attribute: **time period of appearance** [in standardised designation] – **mandatory** (R)

    Internal link to: place name and to area of activity

Note: any kind of information that is deemed to be of importance, a pattern of some kind, e.g. where the name is written in the books or codes observed to occur together with the name, etc. – **optional** (R)

Figure 1

To use such records efficiently, it should be possible to establish the following relations as shown in Figure 2.

Link/relation: between the authority record and the item of the manifestation to which the information applies – **mandatory** (R)

Attribute to the link/relation: a code designating the relation as owner-item relationship – **mandatory** (NR)

Link/relation: between the provenance authority record and an authority/thesaurus record for a place – **mandatory if applicable** (R)

Attribute to the link/relation: a code designating the relation as person-place relationship – **mandatory** (NR)

Link/relation: to digital image of provenance note – **mandatory if applicable** (R)

Attribute to the link/relation: a URI – **mandatory** (R)

Figure 2

Depending on system solutions, the links may have to take the form of references, and the attributes to them may have to be held in bibliographic and holdings records.

The prescription "desirable" above should be interpreted as "mandatory if obvious or easily established".

There should be relator codes both in the authority record and in the bibliographic records, because the person concerned may also appear as author or editor, etc., and then the same authority record should be used. (Not very likely with an unverified name, but nevertheless.)

I was also very tempted to add an attribute for designation of social strata, but it may be too difficult. In Sweden, a Latin or Greek ending to a name always designates an academic person, e.g., Johannes Bureus, Queen Christina's librarian, but it is more difficult with other names. After all, we have to leave something to the researchers.

Having established these data elements as desirable, I immediately abandon the idea of using the MARC21 720 field, as it doesn't offer the required functionality. An unverified name is not of very great interest in its own right. It is its context which we wish to establish.

Finally, as stated above, this discussion paper deals with provenance notes of persons, but I believe that more or less the same data elements would be desirable for corporate bodies as owners.

Examples

I took one of my own books and the record for that manifestation from the Swedish national union catalogue and added the provenance information (of no interest at all, serving only as an example conveniently at hand – and I did not bother to include a provenance record for my ownership of the book). I have deleted the administrative fields and highlighted the relevant provenance data.

```
MARC21 bibliographic record

084      a Ufe.07-c 2 kssb/6
100   1  a Krok, Thorgny O. B. N., d 1834-1921
245   00 a Svensk flora för skolor.n 1, p Fanerogamer / $i Af Th. O.B.N. Krok och S.
           Almquist
246   14 a Svensk flora.
250      a 7. uppl.
260      a Stockholm : b Beijer, c 1900
300      a 256 s.
561   0  a From the collection of GJ. Earlier owners notes: "Gurli Johnson Klass
           VIII 1903"; "Tage Johnson Klass 5 b den 18 april 1906 kl 10,37 fm".
700   1  a Almquist, Sigfrid, d 1844-1923 t Fanerogamer
700   1  a Johnson, Gurli d 1903 4 own
700   1  a Johnson, Tage d 1906 4 own
772   00 $7 p1 a Krok, Thorgny O. B. N., 1834-1921 t Svensk flora c Th.O.B.N. Krok
           och S. Almquist d Stockholm, 1883- w 9900087607 $9 1 $9 8
976   2  a Uf.07-c b Botanik Växtgeografi Sverige
976   2  a Ufe.07-c b Fanerogamer Växtgeografi Sverige
900   1s $6 400 a Almquist, Sigfrid, d 1844-1923 u Almquist, Sigfrid, d 1844-1923
900   1s $6 400 a Krok, Thorgny Ossian Bolivar Napoleon, d 1834-1921 u Krok,
           Thorgny O. B. N., d 1834-1921
```

Figure 3

The corresponding authority records could look like the example below (again leaving out the administrative fields).

```
MARC21 authority record

024   7  a [unique id] 2 [id scheme]
040      [cataloguing institution]
043      a sw
045   0  b d1903
100   1  a Johnson, Gurli d 1903 e owner g female
678   0  a School pupil. Sister of Tage Johnson, [unique id].


024   7  a [unique id] 2 [id scheme]
040      [cataloguing institution]
043      a sw
045   0  b d1903
100   1  a Johnson, Tage d 1906 e owner g male
678   0  a School pupil. Brother of Gurli Johnson, [unique id]
```

Figure 4

Field 045 can also hold a date range: 045 2 b d1903 b d1910

Field 856 [Electronic location and access] is available in all MARC21 record formats, bibliographic, authority and holdings.

The MARC21 authority format doesn't seem to offer exactly what is needed. I can't find any way to record a relator code, only relator term. Gender designation I put in 100 g, which can hold any kind of information that can't be put anywhere else. A unique identifier can be put in 024, but the source of the scheme would have to be registered in the MARC code lists. I find no simple way of referring to the unique id of another entity.

The following example in UNIMARC has been provided by Mirna Willer (National and University Library, Zagreb).

The example consists of two bibliographic records for two books and two authority records for two owners in one particular time of the copies' history. The first bibliographic record describes the only copy held by the National and University Library, Zagreb, while the second one describes three copies (primj. a, primj.b, primj. c), only one of which was owned by the persons of interest here (primj. a). The owners were Ljudevit Gaj, Croatian linguist, historian, writer and politician, and his son Velimir Gaj, himself also a writer and the inheritor of his father's library. Therefore the access points (702) to both Gajs are made, as well as the provenance information in the copy specific notes (317): the reference, *Knjižnica Gajeva*, according to which the cataloguer ascertained the ownership of the father (Ljudevit), and Velimir's signature on the copies. The copies are now owned by the National and University Library, which can be assumed by the shelf number in subfield $5 and also field 990 (not shown in the examples) .

UNIMARC bibliographic record 1:

001	941230003	
200	1#	$a Argumenta psalmorum sexaginta, distributis ordine versuum sententiis $f dictata a Matthia Flacio Illyrico, in Academia Vvitebergensi $g [praefatio] Philippus Melanchthon
210	##	$a Francoforti $c ex officina Petri Brubachii $d anno 1550
215	##	$a [16], 255 str. $c ilustr. $d 16o (15 cm)
300	##	$a Jed. oblik autorova imena: Matija Vlačić Ilirik
316	##	$a Uvezano u marmorirane korice s kožnatim hrptom $5 CiZaNSK, RIIF-16o-31 *[316 = note relating to copy in hand]*
317	##	$a Iz knjižnice Ljudevita Gaja → Gaj, Velimir. Knjižnica Gajeva. Zagreb, 1875 $5 CiZaNSK, RIIF-16o-31 *[317 = Provenance note]*
317	##	$a Na nasl. str. zapis: Velimir Gaj 1873 $5 CiZaNSK, RIIF-16o-31
318	##	$a Pregledano $c 19941230 $l Oštećen uvez $n Restaurirati uvez $5 CiZaNSK, RIIF-16o-31 *[318 = Action note]*
606	##	$3 940114054 $a Protestantizam
620	##	$a Njemačka $d Frankfurt
700	#1	$3 910625104 $a Vlačić Ilirik $b Matija
702	11	$3 921007047 $a Melanchthon $b Philipp $4 080
702	11	$3 930722310 $a Braubach $b Peter $4 750
702	11	$3 910312145 $a Gaj $b Ljudevit $4 390
702	11	$3 910725070 $a Gaj $b Velimir $4 390

Figure 5

UNIMARC bibliographic record 2:

001 940510150

200 1# $a Dictionarium quinque nobilissimarum Europae linguarum $e Latinae, Italicae, Germanicae, Dalmatiae [!] et Ungaricae $a Vocabula Dalmatica quae Ungari sibi usurparunt $a Institutio christiana $a Symbolum apostolorum $f [Fausti Verantij]

210 ## $a Venetiis $c apud Nicolaum Morettum $d 1595

215 ## $a [8], 128 str. $c ilustr. $d 8o (20 cm)

300 ## $a Ime autora preuzeto sa str. [7]

300 ## $a Jed. oblik autorova imena: Faust Vrančić

300 ## $a Str. 1-9 nisu numerirane

300 ## $a Admodum reverendo viro ... Alfonso Carillio author salutem: str. [3-4]

316 ## $a Uvezan u marmorirane kartonske korice s kožnatim hrptom $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a**   *[316 = Note relating to copy in hand]*

316 ## $a Neuvezan, vrlo oštećen i nepotpun primj., nedostaju str.: [1-8], 23-24, 75-78, 121-122, 127-128 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. b

316 ## $a Uvezan u kožu, vrlo oštećen i nepotpun primj., nedostaju str.: [1-8], 126-128 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. c

317 ## $a Iz knjižnice Ljudevita Gaja → Gaj, Velimir. Knjižnica Gajeva. Zagreb, 1875 $5 CiZaNSK, RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a** *[317 = Provenance note]*

317 ## $a **Na nasl. str. potpis: Velimir Gaj 1873** $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a**

317 ## $a Na str. 126 zapis: Saecularis presbiter Wolffgangus Vlatkovich anno Domini1695 die 18 Xbris $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. b

317 ## $a Na poleđini prednje korice zapis: Kupio u Splitu hrv. književnik Fr. Fancev $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. c

318 ## $n Restaurirati $c 19941031 $l Dobro očuvano $a Pregledano $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a**   *[318 = Action note]*

318 ## $a Pregledano $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. b $l Jako oštećeno $c 19941031

318 ## $l Jako oštećeno $a Pregledano $c 19941031 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. c

321 1# $a Badalić. Iugoslavica 200

456 #1 $1 001430704109

606 ## $3 940510040 $a Rječnici $x višejezični $y Hrvatska $z 16. st. $2 rbgenr

620 ## $a Italija $d Venezia

700 #1 $3 920116071 $a Vrančić $b Faust

702 11 $3 930712033 $a Moretti $b Niccolo $4 750

702 11 $3 910312145 $a **Gaj** $b Ljudevit $4 390 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a**

702 11 $3 910725070 $a **Gaj** $b Velimir $4 390 $4 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 **primj. a**

702 11 $3 910514052 $a Fancev $b Franjo $4 390 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. c

702 11 $3 940524075 $a Vlatković $b Wolfgang $4 390 $5 CiZaNSK: RIIC-8o-59 primj. b

801 #0 $a HR $b NSK, R $g HR PPIAK

Figure 6

UNIMARC authority record 1:

```
001   10312145
100   ## $a 19910312ahrvy0191    ba
200   #1 $a Gaj $b Ljudevit
400   #1 $a Gay $b Ludwig
400   #1 $a Gaj $b Lj.
675   ## $a 886.2 $c hrvatska književnost
675   ## $a 949.75 $c hrvatska povijest
675   ## $a 801 $c opća lingvistika
675   ## $a 32 $c politika
801   #0 $a HR $b NSK
810   ## $a Povijest hrvatske književnosti / Ivo Frangeš. Zagreb, Ljubljana, 1987.
810   ## $a Programski spisi hrvatskog narodnog preporoda / priredio Miroslav Šicel.
           Zagreb, 1997.
830   ## $a Hrvatski gramatičar, povjesničar, pjesnik i političar, 1809.-1872.
```

Figure 7

UNIMARC authority record 2:

```
001   910725070
100   ## $a 19910725ahrvy0191    ba
200   #1 $a Gaj $b Velimir
300   0# $a Zagreb, 1845.-Zagreb, 1902., pisac, sin Ljudevita Gaja → HBL, sv. 4, str. 538
801   #0 $a HR $b NSK
```

Figure 8

This paper is offered for discussion.

Comments should be sent to the author:

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