Incunaboli a Catania': a new method to describe incunabula
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The 126 copies of incunabula of the Catania City Library (Sicily, Italy) are being described as individual books, with their own peculiarities: notes, marginalia, ornamental letters and decorations, traces of use, provenance, bindings, restorations, status and conservation.

Former owners, style of decorations, bindings, manuscript notes are considered as fundamental elements to trace the exemplar's provenance; we try to register each kind of copy specific data in order to implement MEI database and convert physical data evidence into historical data.

We handle and connect copy specific data with documentary sources (correspondences, acquisition registers, old library catalogues) to understand how the collection was created over time.

The first application of this method is in the catalogue Incunaboli a Siracusa (Roma, Viella, 2015)

How to communicate with electronic catalogues?

MEI is the key!

ISTC (collections and holding institutions)

MEI hosts the copy specific data from 'Incunaboli a Catania' printed catalogue and interacts with ISTC

"Incunaboli a Catania" printed catalogue with copy specific data

Material Evidence in Incunabula

Every copy of data recorded (call number, physical description, decorations, manuscript notes, etc.) is recorded using the standard descriptors for provenance, status and restorations. This approach allows the reproduction of copies and, through the data, the collection.

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