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Incunabula Short Title Catalogue (ISTC): The International Database of 15th-century European Printing. Database

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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The British Library, with contributions from institutions worldwide.

Incunabula Short Title Catalogue (ISTC): The International Database of 15th-century European Printing. Database.

London: Consortium of European Research Libraries, 2016. Accessed 5 March 2019. data.cerl.org/istc/_search.

Begun in 1980, the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue (ISTC)* seeks to record every item of European printing from movable type (not from engraved plates or woodblocks) to 1501. As of August 2016, the database contained records of 30,518 editions, which includes an unspecified number of sixteenth-century items that had been erroneously listed in previous incunabula catalogues as belonging to the fifteenth century. The audience for the *ISTC* is anyone interested in incunabula, the history of the book, the history of printing, the economics of the publishing industry or book trade in its infancy, the history of literacy, and any other field of study that relies in whole or in part on data concerning early printed books. The *ISTC* is part of the Heritage of the Printed Book (HPB) database of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL), which extends to the end of the hand-press era, ca. 1830.

The *ISTC* is exceedingly easy to use. Any search term or combination of keywords will gain the user access to the standard (and standardized) bibliographic information about each edition, including links to any digital online facsimiles available, as well as information on all known extant copies of that edition and their geographical location. The catalogue employs standard names for printers, authors, and places, which are referred to by their contemporary English names. Should a user wish to be more systematic in searching the *ISTC*, CERL via the help button at the bottom of the *ISTC* home page offers a brief introduction to the process and provides a list of additional terms that can be combined using Boolean operators. The terms run from the *ISTC* number to place and date of publication to publisher to language and the British Library shelf mark. Using these terms can improve the accuracy of the

1. These reviews are published in collaboration with *Early Modern Digital Review*. They also appear in vol. 2, no. 2 (2019) of *EMDR* (emdr.itercommunity.org).

search. For example, searching for “place:stockholm NOT location:sw” will find all books published in Stockholm that are not held in Swedish libraries; searching for “author:schedel AND title:liber” will find all editions of Hartmann Schedel’s *Liber chronicarum* worldwide, and adding “AND date:1493” will isolate all the Latin and German editions from that year. If the user wishes to download the results of a search, *ISTC* offers several options, beginning with ISBD (Text), or “International Standard Bibliographic Description,” to help the user create a bibliography or catalogue. The other reference management outputs offered range from Excel (csv), BibTex, Marc21, and JSON to YAML (plain text), which stands for “YAML Ain’t Markup Language” (what the YAML website refers to as “a human friendly data serialization standard for all programming languages”; yaml.org.)

Since the *ISTC* provides the user with unparalleled coverage but not unparalleled detail in its descriptions, links are provided where appropriate to online incunabula catalogues that do supply such detail, such as the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* (gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de), the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Inkunabelkatalog* (inkunabeln.digitale-sammlungen.de/start.html), and *Bod-Inc online* (incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk). Some items listed in *ISTC* are also now described in rich detail in another CERL database, *Material Evidence in Incunabula* (*MEI*; data.cerl.org/mei/_search?lang=it). *MEI* records data such as decoration, binding, stamps, annotations, price—all the material evidence that makes each edition unusual if not unique and allows researchers to track those editions temporally and geographically. Many more items in the *ISTC* will be linked to *MEI* as that database develops.

The future and longevity of *ISTC* are not in question because the project is maintained by the British Library and CERL, not by an individual scholar or institution. The structure and content of the database are clear, the interoperability dependable, and the use of standardized methodologies consistent. I have two minor suggestions to make, however. First, there should be a “home” button in the drop-down menu in the upper right-hand corner of the webpage to allow the user to return to the *ISTC* home page whenever he or she desires. At present, after completing a search, for example, the only way to return to the homepage is to use “home” as a search term. You will be told that “Your search did not retrieve any records,” but you will simultaneously be brought back to the *ISTC* homepage. Second, there is no historical documentation on the project site. Although such a history has no impact on

the usability of the site, some users such as I would like to know more about the project. The history of attempts to catalogue incunabula, for example, is an interesting one that reaches back into the eighteenth century. The history of the *ISTC* itself is intriguing as well. Lotte Hellinga's "Ten Years of the Incunabula Short-Title Catalogue (*ISTC*)" in *Bulletin du bibliophile* 1 (1990), 125–32, starts the story, and that story will clearly continue into the foreseeable future.

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Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME). Database.

Toronto: University of Toronto Library and University of Toronto Press, 2019. Accessed 6 March 2019. leme.library.utoronto.ca/.

Lexicons of Early Modern English (hereafter *LEME*) is a historical database of lexical items that presents a survey of vocabulary early modern English people would have encountered. Covering 1,139,993 words in total, *LEME* offers a user 60,891 modernized English headwords to explore, all of which are culled from language-learning resources including lexical encyclopaedias, monolingual and multilingual dictionaries, hard-word glossaries, spelling lists, and other forms of lexically valuable treatises such as grammars and specific literary texts. Designed as a collated reference hub for lexical data, *LEME* is broadly presented as an index, with the ability to search for a range of variables.

LEME began in 1992 as a prototype and has been in existence in one form or another since approximately 1996. Ian Lancashire serves as general editor, with a not-insignificant army of collaborators including database programmers, research assistants, and text entry firms working with him. They are all named in the documentation regarding the project available in the header menu. It would also be remiss to discuss this project without acknowledging ample support for nearly thirty years from the University of Toronto Libraries' technical services department and the University of Toronto Press as its long-term publisher, representing an enormous amount of institutional and infrastructural buy-in. The labour and collaboration underlying these sorts of partnerships are essential to the long-term success of any digital project.