

TECHNICAL FEATURES

OPAL (Online Public Access Library) **libri antichi** is a thematic digital resource based on the digitization of ancient books belonging to the library collections. It is based on the basic Anglo-Saxon idea of “**public library**” developed into a website for free reading: **easy-to-use interface**, **free web access**, a **subject system** for the open shelf arrangement of the books, which makes them directly available to the users.

OPAL works as a special collection library, retaining however the principles (the mission) of a “public library”, through a modern **electronic open shelf**.

Books are divided into three main sections: “**teatro**”, “**narrativa**” and “**miscellanea**” and can be respectively indexed by **author**, **title**, **typographer**, and **year** of publication. The retrieval system also enables the user to search through the respective fields by **author**, **title**, **typographer** and **place** of publication. Two more filters are available through options like “**illustrated**” and “**not illustrated**”, and the “**historical collection of origin**”. The section “**miscellanea**” is supplied with a further filter that clusters the books into a selection of subjects through an on-line **thesaurus**.

A **bulletin** about the latest published items is provided for those who periodically follow OPAL news, while users can suggest titles of the library collection to be digitalized: among the services OPAL is offering, there is the intent to publish signalled rare books (out of copyright, obviously) on the OPAL website which therefore becomes an interactive resource reinventing the way of “**document delivery**”.

Short title standards are used for the **descriptive metadata**. **SBN** (Sistema Bibliotecario Nazionale) is the suggested Italian library system for librarians who want to get further cataloguing elements of books; some of the titles on SBN are also linked to the **full-text** and are available through the University **OPAC**.

Digital images are realized with a **plain scanner** as **PDF**-files. Digital images are not in text format and are not elaborated by a photo editor. For these reasons the result of the scanning process is far from perfect, due to the conditions of the book, its manual placing on the scanner-table glass, and image shadings and deformations. We believe that this does not jeopardize the graphic and print quality of the images, as their definition is high enough to allow a correct **philological analysis** of the texts.

In order to download a single file, to display the full text, to turn over the pages or print them, users need the **Adobe Acrobat reader** freeware application on their computer. OPAL libri antichi can be freely linked by other websites. Source quote is kindly requested.

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