**MINISTRY FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ACTIVITIES AND TOURISM
CENTRAL INSTITUTE FOR CATALOGUING AND DOCUMENTATION**

AUTHORITY FILE - CREATION

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Area

      Cataloguing

Data

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What

Authority files are archives of verified terms gathered in self-supporting databanks, parallel to and linked with the main cultural heritage databanks. In the SIGECweb system, authority files are structured sheets that regulate insertion of data on authors (AUT), bibliographic information (BIB), excavations (DSC) and archaeological surveys (RCG). In order to link an authority file with a catalogue sheet these two instruments **must have the same code for cataloguing agency** (ESC) **and same identifying code** AUTH/BIBH/DSCH/RCGH (see glossary). The code must be unique for authority type within the cataloguing agency.

Who

The cataloguer can create new authority files during new cataloguing, computerisation and revisions.

When

New files can be created during cataloguing and computerisation, working from the drop-down **Create** menu, after ascertaining that the databank does not contain the authority file needed.

Authority files can also be created when compiling or revising any part of a catalogue sheet requiring such a file, when one not yet present in the databank. This is the only way of creating an authority file during revision operations, since at this time the Create menu will not appear.

How

The example that follows illustrates the case of a bibliographic sheet, but the operations are the same for all four kinds of authority files (AUT, BIT, DSC, RCG).

The system already shows the ECP and ESC fields compiled as soon as the cataloguer opens the drop-down Create menu for the new sheet. The cataloguer must enter the BIBH **identifying code** (see glossary), which must be unique for type of authority and cataloguing agency (the system carries out checks on this). Compilation of the remainder of the sheet then follows the standard editorial rules.

The need for a new authority file could arise during editing of an existing catalogue sheet, when the necessary authority file results as unavailable in the databank. After having enlarged the BIB section, the cataloguer then proceeds according to standard procedures, compiling the BIBX compulsory fields and attaching the authority file using the "chain-link" button.

The chain-link button brings down the search menu, where the operator can search: i) by identifying code, inserting the **complete BIBH** (see glossary) of the BIB sheet they are searching for or intend to create, or ii) by inserting at least three letters of an entry expected to be present in any field, in **Search by contents** (see notes). If the search fails to yield any results (the note of the failed search appears in the upper left of the drop-down menu), the cataloguer can create a new authority file by clicking on the **Create new** button. If the cataloguer has used **Search by contents** they must insert field values that they are sure will return positive search results, in the event of the pre-existence of the desired authority file. For example, a negative result from a search for "name of publisher" would be insufficient to ensure that the desired authority file is not yet present.
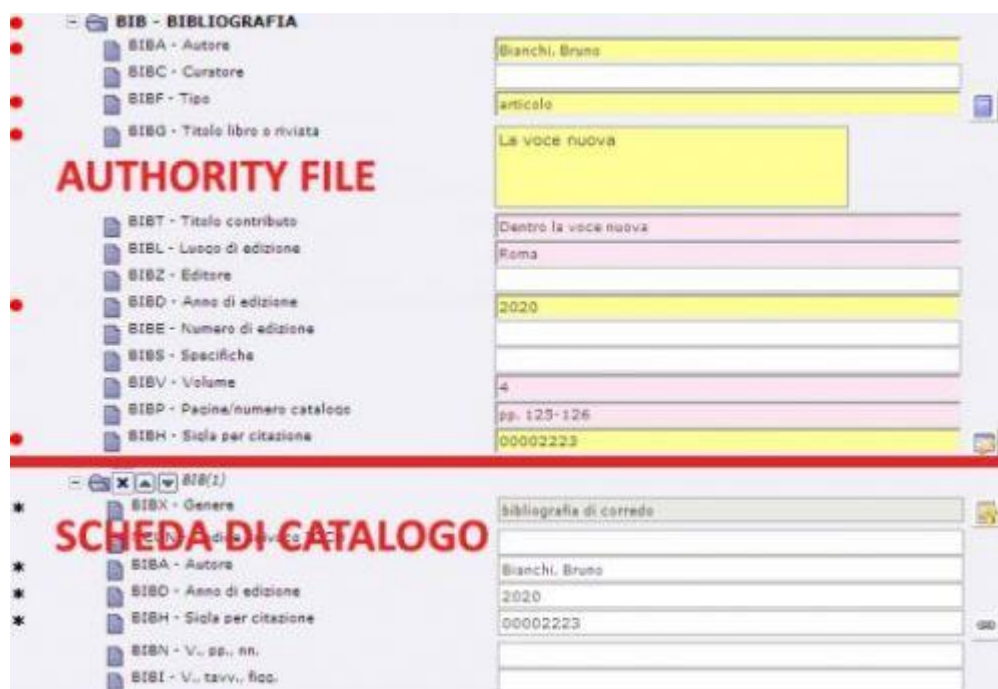
From here onward the compilation of the sheet follows standard procedures. At completion, the cataloguer has to click the "Connect" [Collega] button (see figure below), to connect the authority file to the catalogue sheet.

NOTE: The procedure requires direct compilation of the compulsory BIBX field in the catalogue sheet. At the moment of connection, the BIBA, BIBD and BIBH fields in the authority file will overwrite the corresponding feels in the catalogue sheet. However, any changes to the BIBA and BIBD fields in the catalogue sheet will not have effect on the corresponding fields in the authority file, while a change in the BIBH field leads to the disconnection of the authority file from the catalogue sheet (see "**Use case**" note, below).

Results

At this point, the BIBH connection field and the compulsory BIBA and BIBD fields of the catalogue sheet (indicated by black asterisks), will be automatically updated with the corresponding data from the authority file.

Once completed, the sheet is visible from "Review data" [Riepologo data] in the reserved area of the authority file, and exists as an autonomous object within the bibliographic data base (or author, excavation, survey database).

Note

Search contents: The system carries out a search of all fields. The search term can only be imposed as full words or the first part of a word. For example, searches for "Bellini" or "Bell" would be valid, but not "ellini".

Review: Currently, authority files are unlike catalogue sheets in that once the file has been scientifically checked, there are no functions for direct revision. However they are also not "historicised", and are instead reworked whenever a connected catalogue sheet is revised (see the user manual for "Revision Programme"). This means that currently, the system does not carry out concordance checks or otherwise manage changes to the authority files. Therefore, operators are advised to limit any changes to the authority files to the minimum, once these have been scientifically verified and entered into connection with the catalogue sheets.

Unique identifying codes: There can be difficulty in inserting the unique identifying code, in the case that the system observes the code as already being present in a different part of the authority file (for example a BIBH identical to an AUTH). To avoid this problem, we suggest substituting the first 0 in the code string with an A, B, D, or R, respectively for AUT, BIB, DSC and RCG files.

Verification workspace: When a catalogue sheet is open in "revision" mode, the "chain-link" icon does not appear in the connection field for the identifying code (BIBH, AUTH, etc.), because the sheet is not connected to the databanks of different authority files. However the field is editable, and the verifier can compile the field manually. The data has to be entered very precisely, since only exact compilation will ensure connection between the catalogue sheet and authority file, once both of these have been scientifically checked and inserted in the databank.

Use case: After using the chain-link button to connect to an Authority file, thus automatically compiling the catalogue-sheet BIBA, BIBD and BIBH fields, the system allows the operator to position the cursor in the BIBH field and manually revise it. While this operation has no effect on the other fields of the section, it will have the following consequences:

← 1. If the operator substitutes the BIBH with that for a different authority file in the database, the catalogue sheet will automatically connect to the other authority file, but without changing the BIBA and BIBD fields, because these fields are entered only at the moment of connecting the catalogue sheet and authority file. The connection to the new authority file will be visible in the summary line at the bottom of the catalogue sheet, under the buttons.
← 2. On the other hand, if the operator changes the BIBH to a nonexistent code, the databank will maintain the entries in the different fields of the catalogue sheet, but it will no longer be connected to any Authority file.

When the catalogue sheet proceeds to formal checks and is sent for scientific verification, **the system will not detect any error**, but in case 1, the catalogue sheet will continue on with data incongruent to the connected authority file, and in case 2 it will continue with the fields compiled, but remain unconnected to any authority file. NOTE that these results cause significant problems in data management, because the cataloguing data are at that point only partial. For example, in the case of a bibliographic authority file (BIBD), the catalogue sheet will include only the Author

(BIBA) + Year of publication (BIBD) + Identifying code (BIBH): data insufficient to retrieve the complete bibliographic information.

Visibility: Like all other records, when authority files are in progress they are visible only to the operating cataloguer. Once sent for scientific checking they become visible to the scientific verifier, the cataloguing agency (ESC) administrator (and that of the ECP, if different from ESC), as well as the responsible regional directorate of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. Once the scientific checks are complete, the authority files become visible to all cataloguers working for the given ESC. For this reason, particularly for cataloguing campaigns or other operations involving multiple cataloguers, all operators are strongly advised to first compile and complete the scientific checks for the authority files before beginning the intended cataloguing operations.

Glossary

← **AUTH/BIBH/DSCH/RCGH**: The unique identifying code within the cataloguing agency (ESC) databank, consisting of eight alphanumeric characters. Every cataloguing agency maintains its own list of identifying codes, avoiding the creation of duplicate bibliographic sheets, scientifically checked, but with the same code. In fact the system will not accept duplicate codes, but their existence can create confusion as multiple cataloguers work on the preparation of different records.

← **NCUN**: The unique numeric control code assigned by ICCD to each archival record. The code serves to identify the record (in this case authority file) in unequivocal manner, at national level. The codes are designed to allow central management of authoritative record lists across the entire system, however this aspect of the system is still in development.

← Historicising: The process of archiving an existing record in a databank and replacing it with a revised record identified by the same unique identifying code (NCT). Historicisation maintains the original record, can be reversed, and still permits viewing of the "historic" versions. At the moment, historicising is operative only for catalogue sheets (i.e. not for authority files). Therefore, if an authority file is revised together with its catalogue sheet and then proceeds to scientific verification, operators will find that the catalogue sheet is now connected to two authority files: the original version is not historicised, and both it and the revised version will both be present.