ONLINE DATABASE

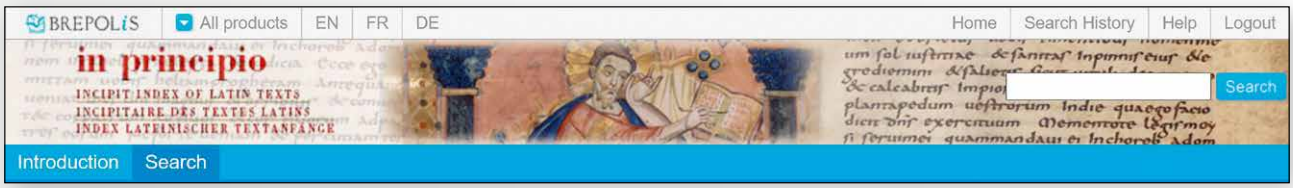
In Principio

Incipit Index of Latin Texts

An invaluable research tool for the study of the writers, texts and manuscripts of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance

BREPOLiS

Brepols Online Databases



In Principio – Incipit Index of Latin Texts

Those who are interested in the writers, texts and manuscripts of Antiquity and the Middle Ages know how difficult it is to identify a particular work encountered by chance in a manuscript, or, when studying or publishing a particular text, to make an inventory of all the manuscripts in which it appears. The incipit or first words of a work thus remain the surest means of designating it unambiguously. In a sense, the incipit, by virtue of its invariability, is the identity card of the text.

Standing apart from the diversity of attributions and titles, the incipit guarantees the presence of a particular text. The incipit serves as a link between the text and the manuscript. The search software of *In Principio* enables to answer two main questions about the incipit:

- who is the author and what is the title of the text?
- which manuscripts contain the text?

Mission

The incipit and explicit serve to put texts and manuscripts into relationship with one another. Thus *In Principio* lends itself to two principle functions:

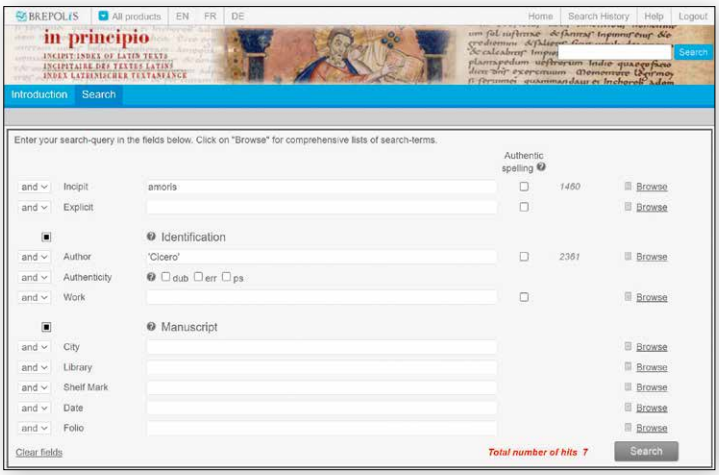
- identifying texts written in the Latin language, from its origin to around 1500; for instance, when analysing the contents of a manuscript;
- locating manuscripts which transmit a work, particularly for researchers preparing a critical edition of the work or a study of its transmission.

In addition to searching by incipit and explicit, *In Principio* users can search any of the fields appearing in the search screen. Querying the Author and Work fields, for example, is useful in three cases:

- in constructing a list of incipits associated with a given text;
- when attempting to identify an author whose name is known only in part (that is, by performing an author search);
- when attempting to identify texts described in a medieval inventory (that is, through performing a title search)

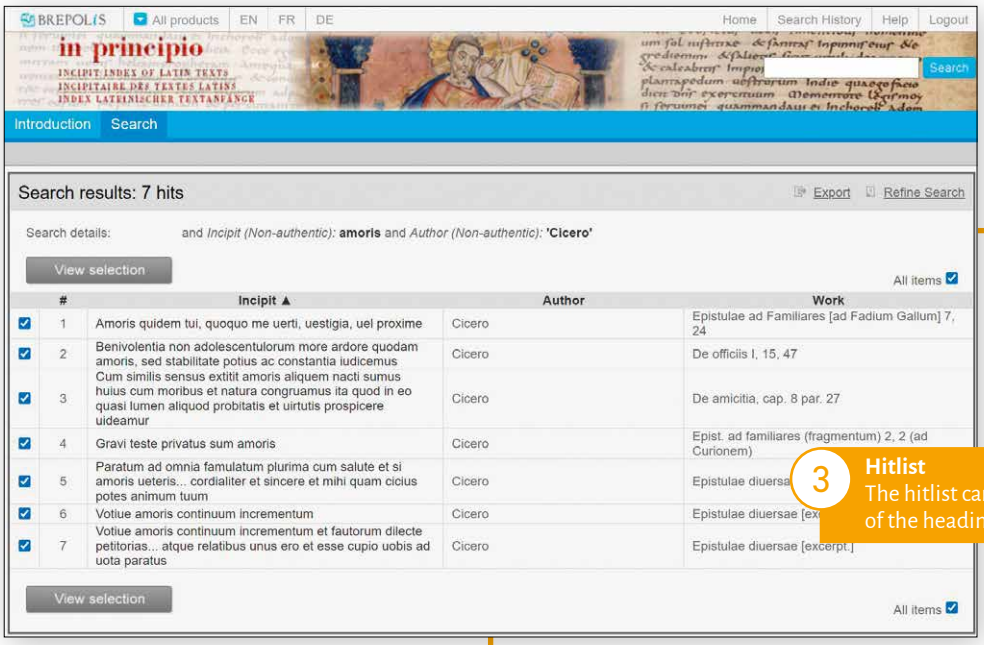
Key Features

- Over 1.4 million records from three major institutions and libraries, supplemented with a growing number of individual collections
- Approximately 25,000 new entries each year
- A search screen providing guidance by offering ten search fields that enable precise searching
- Multilingual search interface (English, French, German)
- Links with the *Bibliographie Annuelle du Moyen Âge Tardif (BAMAT-Online)*, and with *Clavis Clavium (ClaCla)*, the go-to database to access Late Antique and Medieval Christian Literature (available in Open Access)
- Integration of orthographic equivalencies, to accommodate variations in medieval spelling

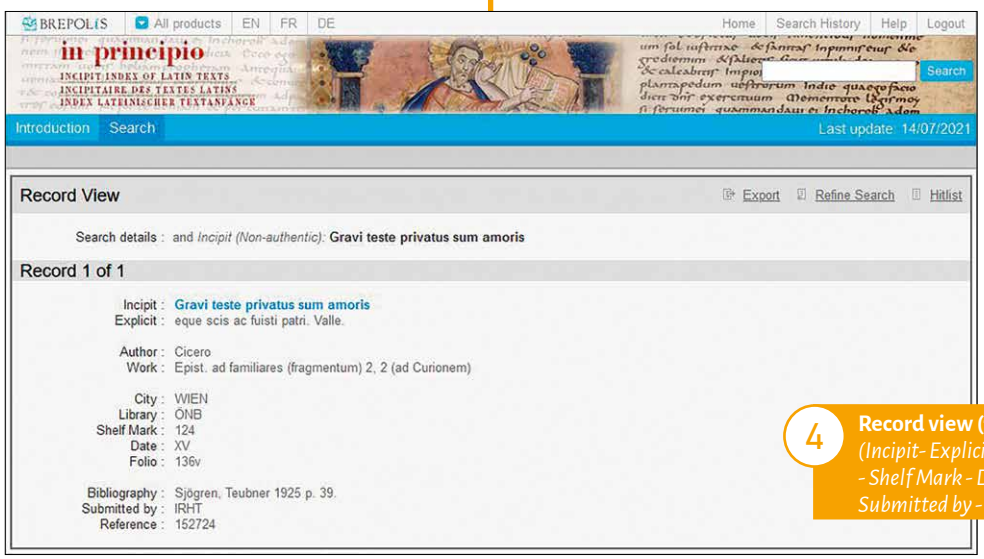


1 **Search** with numerous search fields: *Incipit, Explicit, Author (and Authenticity) Work, City, Library, Shelf Mark, Date, Folio*

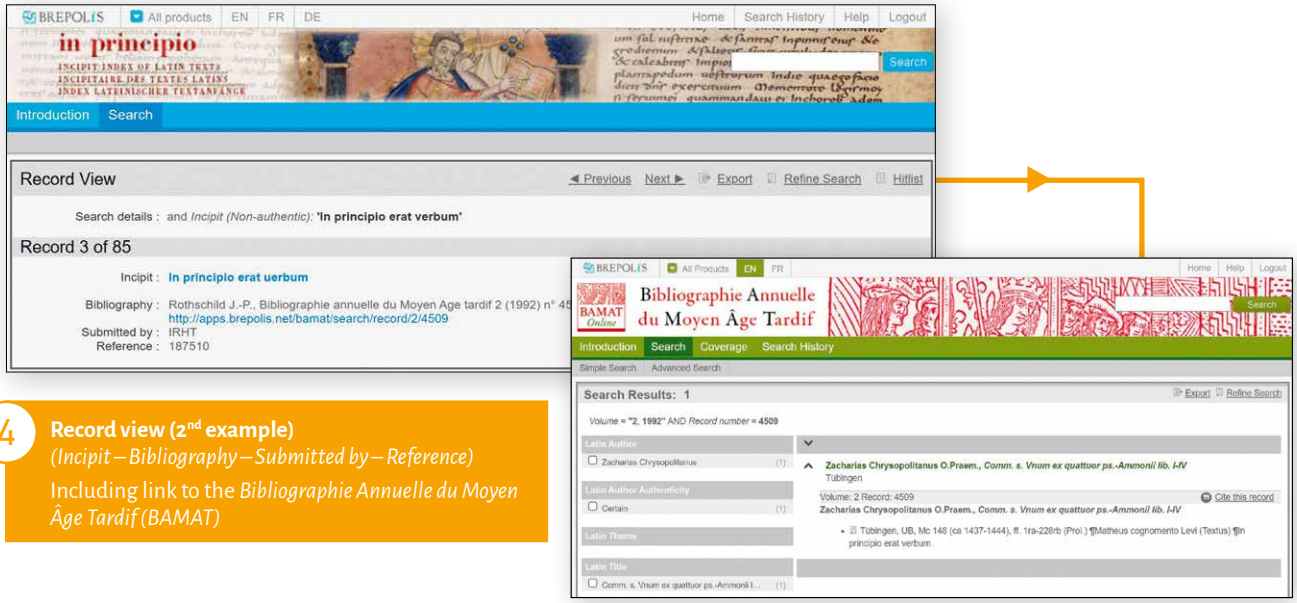
2 **Browse lists** available for all search fields



3 **Hitlist**
The hitlist can be sorted by clicking on one of the headings, *Incipit, Author* or *Work*.



4 **Record view (1st example)**
(Incipit- Explicit - Author - Work - City - Library - Shelf Mark - Date - Folio - Bibliography - Submitted by - Reference)



4 **Record view (2nd example)**
(Incipit – Bibliography – Submitted by – Reference)
Including link to the *Bibliographie Annuelle du Moyen Âge Tardif (BAMAT)*

Academic Partners:

- the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (https://www.irht.cnrs.fr/)
- the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (https://hmml.org/)
- the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (https://www.bnf.fr/)

Comments made by users

'The intellectual significance of the proposed project is undeniable with the context of humanities-based research focusing on medieval manuscripts. For textual editors, ready to access to, and identification of, manuscripts is essential, and having manuscript incipits available in electronic form will greatly improve research efforts.'

'*In Principio* is valuable to all of the humanities in as much as it identifies the texts of music, agronomy, astrology and astronomy, naval warfare and weapons, falconry and herbs. It is a universal finding aid for all learning.'

'*In Principio* is an electronic finding tool for the humanities. Publishing a corpus of incipits is a fresh contribution to the body of reference tools for scholarship.'

More information ?

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Free Trial

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