## FAIR Heritage

Digital Methods, Scholarly Editing and Tools for Cultural and Natural Heritage





# Ontology-based data integration in EPNet

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### The Roman Empire trade system

## The first complex European trade network



Tabula Peutingeriana ©Austrian National Library

"An integrated network of interactions and interdependences between the Mediterranean basin and northern Europe"



Dressel 20 Kiln Sites @Lower Guadalquivir Valley (Remesal, 1997)



The Roman Empire transport system (c.125 AD) http://people.hofstra.edu/

## The economy of the Roman Empire

An ongoing debate!

- Traditionally, the study of the food distribution during the Roman Empire was focused on the life of the city of Rome and on the long distance trade. More recently, the food distribution to the Roman army also gained a primary role in the overall understanding of the Roman Empire trade system.
- It has been argued that the emperor and his circle managed the relationship between food and army in order to supervise and control the whole Roman territory and to strengthen and maintain their own political power.
- Periphery and regional food distribution then obtain the status of first-class citizens in the understanding of the whole system.
- Starting from this innovative idea, different models have been proposed.



House of Julia Felix @Pompeii

## Informal approaches are too informal...



Production and Distribution of Food during the Roman Empire: Economic and Political Dynamics

- A plethora of unfalsifiable theories has been developed over the last couple of centuries to explain the organisation of the Roman Empire trade system.
- The ongoing debate remains exclusively speculative and often based on rhetoric.
- Specialists from History and Archaeology do not even consider the possibility that their hypotheses can be formally expressed as theories that can be falsified<sup>(1)</sup> by analytical and computational methods.

<sup>(1)</sup> Popper, Karl, <u>*The Logic of Scientific Discovery*</u>, Basic Books, New York, NY, 1959

 A formal study of the mechanisms that have characterised the economic and political relations informing the Roman Empire trade system was still missing.



## The data landscape



Edible items: olive oil, wine, etc.



Production places



Containers



Temporal context: production, distribution, etc.



Inscriptions: stamps and tituli picti











Producers and Traders

## Multiple datasets, physically distributed



### Baetis/Certis (river)

Creators: Jr., F.H. Stanley, R.C. Knapp Contributors: R. Warner, R. Talbert, Sean Gillies, Tom Elliott, Jeffrey Becker Copyright © The Contributors, Sharing and remixing permitted under terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License (cc-by). Last modified Jun 13, 2019 11:05 AM — History

#### The Guadalquivir river is the fifth longest of the Iberian peninsula.

#### Canonical URI for this page:

https://pleiades.stoa.org/places/256010

Representative Point (Latitude, Longitude): 37.969207, -2.910335

#### Locations:

- Barrington Atlas location (750 BC AD 640)
- location of course of Baetis/Certis fl. (modern)

#### Names:

- · Baetis (750 BC AD 640)
- Certis (AD 300 AD 640)
- · Perkes (unspecified date range)

#### Baetis/Certis (river) makes connections with:

Baetis/Certis (river) = connection = Atlanticus Oceanus (unspecified date range)

#### Baetis/Certis (river) receives connections from:

- Unnamed Bridge = on = Baetis/Certis (river) (30 BC AD 300) • Ligustinus L. + connection + Baetis/Certis (river) (unspecified date n
- Guadaira (river) = connection = Baetis/Certis (river) (modern)
- Singilis (river) = connection = Baetis/Certis (river) (unspecified date r
- Ilipa Magna ⇒ on ⇒ Baetis/Certis (river) (30 BC AD 300)
- Baetis Aestuaria = connection = Baetis/Certis (river) (unspecified da

#### Place type:

#### river, drainage

HEIDELBERGER AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN

### EPIGRAPHIC DATABASE HEIDELBERG

number 1

HD no.	↗ HD000165 (newer version at: ↗ EDR)		
work status	checked with photo		
province / Italic region	Etruria (Regio VII)		
modern country	Italy		
ancient find spot	Falerii (Novi), bei		
modern find spot			
find spot (village, street, etc.)			
year	231 AD – 300 AD		
literature ⑦	AE 1982, 0274, (B) AE 1983, 0059, (B) I. Di Stefano Manzella, Supplit 1 (Roma 1981) 143-144, Nr. 21; Foto AE 1982. L. Polverini, in: G. Barbleri (Hrsg.), Il lapidario Zeri di Mentana (Roma 1982) 104-105, Nr. 46; tav. 42 AE 1983.		
Transcription	D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / Aurelio Saturnino / militi torquato legionis / primes(I) Italic(a)e qui vix/sit(I) an(n)is XL messibus(I) VI / diebus X militavit / annis XIIII / Aurelius Arborius / fratri bene mer/enti fecit		



#### previous amphora type next amphora type

Anatolikon Stoma = connection = Baetis/Certis (river) (unspecified d details | characteristics | pictures | drawings | petrology | specimens | bibliography | 🗛 3D models

#### Variants of Dressel 20: [Dressel 20 similis - Oliva 3] [Gauloise 14]

#### Distinctive Features

This has a large globular body with thick, sharply bent or oval shaped handles; short neck often with an internally concave rim and a small basal knob. This form clearly developed from the Augustan prototype Oberaden 83 and eventually evolved into the smaller Tejarillo 1. A broad scheme for the evolution of the Dressel 20 rim has been suggested by Berni (1998), provided under 'Drawings'. This form is commonly stamped towards the summit of the handle, with the name in relief set in a rectangular frame. This is usually an abbreviated name of an individual, presumably the estate owner although place-names are also encountered (Remesal Rodríguez, 1986). It also includes complex painted inscriptions indicating amphora weights and individuals responsible for transport and control (Rodriguez Almeida, 1984). From the third century there is evidence of imperial ownership of some of these estates. See characteristics



Arqueológico de Sevilla (Dr. Fernando Fernández Gómez) Simon Keay

#### Date Range

The typical globular form was introduced by at least the Tiberian period (Xanten) and became established by the Claudian period (Colls et alii, 1977). Production continued up to the second half of the third century (Zevi, 1967, Blázquez Martínez & Remesal Rodríguez, 1999; 2001; 2003) (Monte Testaccio). In the western provinces it is the most common amphora from the late first to the early third centuries AD (Williams & Peacock, 1983, Remesal Rodríguez, 1986). Search: [1st century AD] [2nd century AD] [3rd century AD]

#### Origin

Along the banks of the river Guadalquivir and its tributaries between Seville and Córdoba in the Roman province of Baetica (Clark-Maxwell. 1899; Bonsor, 1931; Ponsich, 1974, 1979, 1991; Chic, 2001) in southern Spain, where kiln sites have been discovered (Click to map in Introduction). A graffito from Carlisle reads ESVRI (Vila Real de São Antonio) on the Algarve of Portugal (Mann, 1955), but the fabric is identical to the Spanish material. The vessel was imitated in Hispania Tarraconensis, along the coastal strip of Baetica and in Germania (Baudoux, 1996; Ehmig, 2003) Search: [North West Europe] [Spain] [Western Mediterranean]



## The available datasets are heterogenous



"I am looking for all the amphoras of type Dressel 20 (information carriers) produced in the settlement of Malpica, together with all the available information about their physical characteristics, dating and carried inscriptions, in all the available datasets."

## Relational model: Example



## SQL queries: Example

- SQL is the standard language for querying relational databases.
- The core of SQL corresponds to relational algebra, a well-studied formalism.

### "Return the amphoras and the date when they were produced"

```
SELECT
    ic.id AS ic_id, d.id AS d_id, dys.startYear AS sy,
    dys.endYear AS ey
FROM
    InformationCarrier ic
    JOIN Producing p ON ic.producing = p.id
    JOIN Dating d ON p.dating = d.id
    JOIN DatingYearSpan dys ON dys.dating = d.id
```

	ic_id integer	d_id integer	sy integer	ey integer
1	1	1	-200	-150
2	13	7	41	54
3	17	8	216	223
4	17	8	214	214
5	84	9	216	223
6	84	9	214	214
7	198	10	216	223
8	198	10	214	214
9	212	11	216	223

## When can this go wrong?

To query this information and obtain the desired answers requires:

- To have a have deep understanding of the datasets.
- To create the proper queries that extract all information about each type of object from each dataset is a complex task even for experts.
- To merge the answers returned from each dataset, possibly filtering out undesired objects or undesired parts of the answers (e.g., the objects that were not produced in 'Malpica').
- To query multiple data sources, one can use a *data federation tool*, which exposes multiple data sources as if they were a single relational database (e.g., Teiid, Exareme) but...

Scholars can easily get lost!

## The way we tackle the problem

- Exploit the knowledge that scholars have about the domain, and make this knowledge and its associated vocabulary explicit
  - ↔ Ontology
- Provide a good understanding of the source data by connecting it to the domain knowledge
   Mappings
- Enable scholars to rapidly formulate intuitive queries using the ontology (which provides a familiar vocabulary and conceptualisations), and not the data sources.



## Ontology-based data integration (OBDI)



### Ontology

provides a unified common vocabulary, and a conceptual view of the data. • OWL 2 QL

### Mappings

relate the terms in the ontology to the data in the sources by means of queries. • R2RML

### Data sources

are external and independent (possibly heterogeneous).

• Oracle, DB2, Postgres, MySQL, etc.

## Ontologies in Computer Science

Ontologies (in Computer Science):

- are used to represent a domain of interest in a way that is comprehensible to end users
- allow for efficient processing by machines, to infer new information from the one explicitly represented.

Ontology languages:

- Are grounded in mathematical logic, which makes them rigorous and not ambiguous.
- Are equipped with a formal syntax, which tells us how to write expressions in the languages: logic based (e.g., ∃carries- ⊑ Inscription) serialised and text-based (e.g., :carries rdf:range :Inscription) diagrammatic/graphic.
- Have a formal semantics, usually provided in terms of logic.

In ontologies, the knowledge is structured into:

- Classes of objects (e.g., Inscription, Finding)
- Properties of class instances (e.g., name, startYear)
- Relationships between classes (e.g., hasShapeType between Stamp and ShapeType)
- Properties of relation instances

The knowledge about the domain is the stated by means of (logical) assertions.

## Ontology development in EPNet

In EPNet, the OBDI team working on the ontological modelling, has made use of this correspondence:

- They have developed the EPNet Conceptual Reference Model (CRM), an extensive conceptual model that *integrates* and *specialise* already existing ontologies and standards for the representation of historical data (e.g., CIDOC CRM, the EAGLE metadata model, and FaBiO).
- Using a domain-oriented vocabulary (made of terms like "inscription", "stamp", "simple" and "full transcription", "grafito", etc.), they have build a ontology expressed in the lightweight ontology language OWL 2 QL



## Query answering over ontologies

- When a query is posed over the ontology, the OBDI system can reason over the knowledge in the ontology to provide more answers.
- This is achieved by rewriting the query posed by the user into a new query, that is then further processed.
- This new query incorporates the knowledge provided by the ontology (the ontology is compiled into the query).

## Query answering by rewriting

Query:  $q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, y), Project(y)$ 

Data: worksFor(jose, epnet) worksFor(martin, ontop) Coordinator(diego)

Coordinator(jose)

```
Query: q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, y), Project(y)
```

```
Perfect rewriting: q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, y), Project(y)

q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, y), worksFor(_, y)

q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, _)

q(x) \leftarrow Researcher(x)

q(x) \leftarrow Coordinator(x)
```

Data: worksFor(jose, epnet) Coordinator(jose) worksFor(martin, ontop) Coordinator(diego)

```
Query: q(x) \leftarrow worksFor(x, y), Project(y)
```

Data: worksFor(jose, epnet) Coordinator(jose) worksFor(martin, ontop) Coordinator(diego)

Evaluating the perfect rewriting over the ABox (seen as a DB) produces as answer {jose, martin, diego}.

Suppose we want to query the Inscriptions in our database:

```
Select ?p WHERE { ?p rdf:type :Inscription .}
```

And our ontology says....

Subclasses of Inscription	Property :isAbout
<ul> <li>Inscription</li> <li>Stamp</li> <li>TitulusPictus</li> </ul>	Domains (intersection) 🕂 Inscription
	Ranges (intersection)

Suppose that we only have mappings for Stamp and the property IsAbout

Without Reasoning there is no Answer!!!!!

- By looking at the mappings, we know that the original query returns no answer.
- By looking at the ontology we know that:
  - every stamp is an inscription
  - every element in the domain of IsAbout is an inscription.

So we can rewrite the original query as:

```
Select ?p WHERE {
{ ?p rdf:type :Stamp . }
UNION
{ ?p :isAbout ?y . }}
```

## Mapping the data sources to the ontology

In an OBDI system, the mapping M encodes how the data  $\mathcal{D}$  in the sources should be used to populate the elements of the ontology.

### Concrete mapping languages

- Several proposals for languages to map a relational DB to an ontology have been made:
- **They assume that** the ontology is populated in terms of triples of the RDF data model.
- Some template mechanism is used to specify the triples to instantiate.

### Virtual data layer

The data  $\mathcal{D}$  and the mapping  $\mathcal{M}$  define a virtual data layer  $\mathcal{V} = \mathcal{M}(\mathcal{D})$ 

- Queries are answered w.r.t. the ontology and  $\mathcal{V}$ .
- We do not really materialize the data of V (it is virtual!).
- Instead, the intensional information in the ontology and the mapping is used to translate queries over the ontology into SQL queries formulated over the sources.



## Virtual RDF graph

The extensional counterpart of an ontology

In RDF, all data are represented by means of triples of the form: <subject, property, object>

- These triples form a so-called RDF graph, which is what the user actually queries.
- The mappings specify how to construct this virtual RDF graph from the data sources and the mappings .

```
t: \mathcal{L}(t(\boldsymbol{x}) \leftarrow s: \mathcal{Q}(\boldsymbol{x})
```

 $C(t_1(\mathbf{x_1})), p(t_1(\mathbf{x_1}), t_2(\mathbf{x_2})), \text{ or } o(t_1(\mathbf{x_1}), t_2(\mathbf{x_2})) \leftarrow SQL \text{ query over the DB schema}$ 

Through the mapping, each result row returned by the SQL query in the right-hand side generates a triple in the virtual RDF graph according to the triple template.

## Virtual RDF graph: Example

### AmphoraT

amld	place	inscription
A24	'Monte Testaccio'	'PNN'
A52	'Hispalis'	'ARVA'

### Mappings:

(:db1/{id}, rdf:type, :Amphora) ← SELECT amId AS id FROM AmphoraT

(:db1/{id}, :carries, {inscription}) ← SELECT amId AS id, inscription FROM AmphoraT

## Virtual RDF graph: Example





:Amphora

### Mappings:

```
(:db1/{id}, rdf:type, :Amphora) ← SELECT amId AS id FROM AmphoraT
generates the triples: (:db1/A24, rdf:type, :Amphora),
(:db1/A52, rdf:type, :Amphora)
```

(:db1/{id}, :carries, {inscription}) ← SELECT amId AS id, inscription FROM AmphoraT generates the triples: (:db1/A24, :carries, 'PNN') (:db1/A52, :carries, 'ARVA')

## Using the mappings in OBDI: "Entity linking" Example

Suppose that we want now to extract the place of amphoras from a different data source:

- We need to combine the answers coming from different data sources.
- The different data sources might adopt different identifiers for data representing the same objects.

AmphoraT			PlaceT		
amld	place	inscription	amphld	place	
A24	'Monte Testaccio'	'PNN'	pl-A24	'Monte Testaccio'	
A52	'Hispalis'	'ARVA'	pl-A52	'Hispalis'	

Generating the same URI (i.e., RDF identifier):

(:db1/{id},:hasPlace, :db3/{place}) ← SELECT *stringOp*(amphId) AS id, place FROM PlaceT

where *stringOp* is a suitable string operation that, e.g., deletes the 'pl-' prefix from the amphora identifier.

The mappings can be used to link the entities extracted from the different data sources, so that at the level of the ontology they can be recognised as representing the same object.

## Using the mappings in OBDI: Example

### Customising the data access

M_63
:Amphora-{ic_id} : <del>producedAt</del> :Tiberius-Government .
select ic.id as ic_id
from
informationCarrier 1c
Producing n
M 64
select ic.id as ic_id
from
InformationCarrier ic
join Brodusing n
M_05
Amphora-IIC Id) iproducedAt :Claudius-Government .
from
InformationCarrier ic
join
Producing p
M_66
:Amphora-{ic_id} :producedAt :Nero-Government .
select ic.id as ic_id
from
informationcarrier ic

We classify the time periods by imperial dynasties.

• For instance, Caligula-Government is defined as (startYear >= 37 and endYear <= 41).

Now, we can query a government instead of integers.

### Homogenising data

• •	Edit Mapping
Mapping ID:	M_34
Target (Triples Te	mplate):
:YearSpan-{d_	id}-{sy}-{ey} :startsAt {sy}^^xsd:integer .
Source (SQL Quer select dys.dating from Dating_Year	<b>/):</b> as d_id, dys.startYear as sy, dys.endYear as ey 'Span dys
A <b>T</b>	~

We homogenise all the *dates* in the different databases: integer, strings, or date, etc.

# Roman Open Data

A Data Visualization & Exploratory interface built in the framework of the ERC Advanced Grant Project <u>EPNet</u>, to foster the exploration of one of the richest database for amphorae and epigraphy, promoting the Open Science principles and practices in the context of Digital Humanities.



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Current searches						
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2273 inscriptions 1972 amphoras	JERIXIZOF		Mayer, 1978		5 cm	
2022 inscriptions       558 amphoras       ★ F ● ♠ Si	E	<u> </u>		SimplifiedTranscription SAXOFERREO		MOFERR
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Africana 1A pic.	Aachen		(Fund-Nr.70/3)	Π	((PALMA))	
Amphora incerta	Abernethy		(PS Moseler)		A	
Augst 17	Adenau		(bei Kanalbau)		A	
Augst 33	Agde		- 6m; 15.2.1905		A?	
Beltrán 2A	Alcolea del Río		-3,5m; 2.12.1939.		AGE?	
Brindisian amphora	Alexandrie		-5-6 m; 21.2.1905.		AL?	
Dressel 1	Alise-Sainte-Reine		-6m; a. 14.2.1905.		ARPL?	
Dressel 10	Altenstadt		0004/141 (13-7-1994)		UUL	
Dressel 2-4	Altkalkar		0004/021 (22-7-1994)		DIM2	
Dressel 2-4 Catalan	Alzey		004/160		DV	
Dressel 2-4 Loire Basin	Amiens		10.11.1904		FEK	
Dressel 20	Angers		12.3.1961.		FSS	
	Ardeche (Alba)					

EPNet Production and Distribution of Food during the Roman Empire: Economic and Political Dynamics

Google Chart

Geo

K 3

Table

Response

Pivot Table

1 •	PREFIX :↔
17	SELECT ?ceipacNumber ?transcription ?findingPlace ?findingSpot ?country
18 🔻	WHERE {
19	?amph a :Amphora .
20	<pre>?amph dcterms:identifier ?ceipacNumber .</pre>
21	?amph :carries ?inscription .
22	?inscription :isTranscribedBy ?linguisticObject .
23	?linguisticObject :hasFullTranscription ?transcription .
24	<pre>?amph :hasFindingPlace ?findplace .</pre>
25	?findplace :fallsWithin ?cou .
26	?cou a :Country .
27	?cou dcterms:title ?country .
28	<pre>FILTER (?country = "Spain")</pre>
29	?findplace :fallsWithin ?mun .
30	?mun a :Municipality .
31	?mun dcterms:title ?findingPlace .
32 🔻	optional {
33	?findplace :fallsWithin ?msp .
34	?msp a :ModernSpot .
35	?msp dcterms:title ?findingSpot .
36	}
37	
38	ORDER BY ?findingPlace ?findingSpot
39	LIMIT 100

Execute & Download CSV



< 🖾 🗖

## What we have seen today

- Ontologies and mappings provide a vocabulary to formulate the queries, enrich them, and find the answers in (possibly) multiple heterogenous data sources.
- Ontologies and Semantic Web Technology can help to handle the problem of accessing and integrating data sources, also in the Cultural Heritage domain.

Diversity:

- Using ontologies describing particular domains allows to hide the *storage complexity*.
- Agreement on data identifiers allows for *integration* of multiple datasets.

Understanding:

 Agreement on a domain-oriented vocabulary allow to better define your data and allows for easy information exchange.

## What we left outside

 Semantic Query Optimisation, SPARQL-based querying, Performance Evaluation, Aggregates and bag semantics, no-SQL repositories, ... Tons of theory. Thank you for your attention!

# Questions?



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