

Structure of the Abecedarium B

M.T. Carrasco Benitez, 13 August 2025

Summary

The *Abecedarium B y Supplementum* [AS] is the main catalogue of the *Biblioteca Colombina* [BC], the library created in the XVI century by Hernando Colón; at the time, one of the largest and with the most advanced and novel library technologies. This catalogue is the key to comprehend the Biblioteca Colombina, but no one tried to tackle the transcription of the *Abecedarium B y Supplementum*, not even the best scholars in the field [MM]:

"Given the large quantity of bibliographic material gathered in the index, fostered by the erudite obsessions that ruled Don Hernando, any characterization of it is, if not impossible, very complex indeed ..."

Probably, traditional palaeographers found it impossible because managing this mass of data is as much a palaeographic as an informatics endeavour. The main result of the current work is a data structure of the top parts to facilitate the full palaeographic transcription down to individual entries; this work is part of the Bachiller Project [BP].

Abecedarium

The *Abecedarium B y Supplementum* is a two volumes catalogue, the current work only addresses the volume of the *Abecedarium B* (Abecedarium), the general characteristics are:

- Size: 308 x 203 mm
- Number of sheets: 458 - numbered 1 to 457, plus one numbered 17BIS.
- Mostly two columns per page numbered from 1 to 1858, with many inconsistencies.
- Each column contains on average about 20 entries, varying from about 8 to 50.
- The total number of entries are unknown, with estimations from 40,000 to over 80,000.
- It contains the alphabetical index by author names, and incipits of all books up to 15,344, those that were there at his death in 1539.
- Many entries are crossed-out, cleaned copied to the *Supplementum B*.
- The original is in the Biblioteca Colombina, there is a facsimile edition [FAC] including both the *Abecedarium B* and the *Supplementum B*.

Column identifier

A unique column identifier is a basic mechanism to process the *Abecedarium*. There are two concepts of columns:

- * *Physical column*: The physical columns as they appear in the *Abecedarium*.
- * *Number column*: The columns as numbered in the *Abecedarium*, usually at the top of the column.

The *column identifier* is based on the physical column. The number columns are messed up with many inconsistencies due to discontinued numbering, duplications, and cramming several into a physical column; hence the number columns are unusable as a unique column identifier. The identifiers must be readily built from the information in the book. The column identifier is composed of:

- sheet number: situated in the top right corner of the recto page; sheet numbering is correct
- page side: recto (r) or verso (v)
- column position: physical column to the left (a), right (b) or single column (x)

Example: 3rb

This means sheet 3, recto, right column

There might be reallocation of number columns to physical column, particularly when there are several allocated in the current mapping. This requires palaeographic analysis.

Data structure

The result of the Abecedarium analysis is a data structure with a mapping of all the physical columns to the number columns, in some cases one to many; including abnormalities in the column numbers such as duplication, discontinued numbering, and miscellaneous data. This data structure is in one file as record-jar format (Annex II). For better visual presentation, from this data an HTML has been generated (Annex I).

Entry identifier

It uniquely identifies an entry of the Abecedarium, composed of:

- column identifier
- ordinal entry number: position of the entry counting from the top of the column

Example: 3rb/2

This means column 3rb, second entry.

Value identifier

It uniquely identifies a value in an entry of the Abecedarium, composed of:

- entry identifier
- key name: the key name in *entry record*

Example: 3rb/2/title

This means column 3rb, second entry, title value; something like *Ilias*.

Data for the entry and value identifiers are not included in the presented data structure, this data will be the result of palaeographic transcription. The entry record is specified separately in the Database Definition [DBD].

Author

Manuel Tomas CARRASCO BENITEZ

Bachiller Project

ca@dragoman.org - <http://bachiller.org>

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Annex I - Visual presentation

Partial cut. The full table is at:

http://bachiller.org/badb/abc_b/struct

1. Column identifier
2. Number column
3. Numbering abnormality, d: duplicated column number - b: broken numbering
4. Set, it might be booklet numbering
5. Notes.

1	2	3	4	5
1ra	1		1	
1rb	2			
17vb	68			
17BISrx	68BISr			1 column
17BISvx	68BISv			1 column
18ra	69			
44va	175			
44vb	176-177			
45ra	178-179			
45rb	180			
164vb	694			
165rx	695			1 column
165va	696			
233rb	970			
233va	971	d		
246va	1013			
246vb	1014	b		
247ra	1031			
457vb	1858			

Annex II - Record-jar format

Partial cut. The full data structure is at:

http://bachiller.org/badb/abc_b/struct.txt

```
col_id:1ra
col_num:1
set:1
%%
col_id:1rb
col_num:2
%%
col_id:17vb
col_num:68
%%
col_id:17BISrx
col_num:68BISr
note:1 column
%%
col_id:17BISvx
col_num:68BISv
note:1 column
%%
col_id:18ra
col_num:69
%%
col_id:44va
col_num:175
%%
col_id:44vb
col_num:176-177
%%
col_id:45ra
col_num:178-179
%%
col_id:45rb
col_num:180
%%
col_id:164vb
col_num:694
%%
col_id:165rx
col_num:695
note:1 column
%%
col_id:165va
col_num:696
%%
col_id:233rb
col_num:970
%%
col_id:233va
col_num:971
num_ab:d
```

References

[AS] Índice General Alfabético o Abecedarium B y Suplemento
<https://opac.icolombina.es/opac/abnetcl.exe?TITN=8534>

[BC] Biblioteca Colombina
<https://icolombina.es>

[BP] Bachiller Project
<http://bachiller.org>

[DBD] Database Definition
<http://bachiller.org/dbdef>

[FAC] Abecedarium B y supplementum : edición facsímil de los manuscritos conservados en la Biblioteca Colombina de Sevilla
<https://documentacion.fundacionmapfre.org/documentacion/publico/en/bib/172318.do>

[MM] "Memoria de las obras y libros de Hernando Colón" del Bachiller Juan Pérez, Tomás Marín Martínez
<https://datos.bne.es/edicion/Mimo0000377756.html>