HUMAN_IT
Epistolary networks in Italian Humanism
Collecting, editing, analysing Italian humanist's letters (1400-1499) - with a critical edition of familiar letters of Iovianus Pontanus

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI FEDERICO II

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CAB

ARACNE

Introduction

During the 15th century the increase of letter-usage and the philological establishment of the Latin language according to the classical purity, promoted the development of a cosmopolitan movement of researching and sharing knowledge. Due to these means of communication, scholars from all over Europe gave life to an ideal society based on the classical values of *Humanitas* (Fumaroli, 2015). The longest-lived intellectual community of the Old country, the so-called **Republic of letters**, rooted in this system of rhetorical and cultural values. The Italian writers, who during the 16th century initiated one of the most remarkable phenomena of the Italian literature – namely, the production of "Libri di lettere" – referred to these values as well. Nevertheless, there are just a few critical studies on the relationship between these remarkable cultural movements and the massive production of letters in the 15th century. The most up-to-date list of projects that use technology to catalogue, digitise, and edit letters concerning these cultural movements – list available on the E.M.L.O. project web page –, shows that none of the 84 researches in progress studies the early stages of these processes: namely, the 15th century. The current project, started in December 2018, aims to encourage a critical review of this massive epistolary production through the creation of an online platform intended to map and catalogue letters, collect metadata, analyse prosopography and epistolary networks, and edit texts drawn from editions free from copyright and from unpublished manuscripts.

Corpus

An initial review allowed us to define a body of 34 epistolaries (1400-1499) – of which more than half derived from editions free from copyright – which totals around 8500 documents. The cataloguing of these materials will be based on collecting of the following metadata: date of the letter; sender of the letter; people mentioned in the letter; recipient of the letter; place of origin of the letter; place of destination of the letter; origin; document type (manuscript letter, manuscript draft, extract, etc.); repository; shelf mark; printed copy details; digital copy details. Meanwhile, we will edit the digital critical text of the familiar letters of Iovianus Pontanus (1429-1479), an Italian humanist, politician, and leading figure of the court of the kingdom of Aragona (around 60 letters; Doglio 1973).

Methodology

GET – ANALYSE – REPRESENT & DISSEMINATE
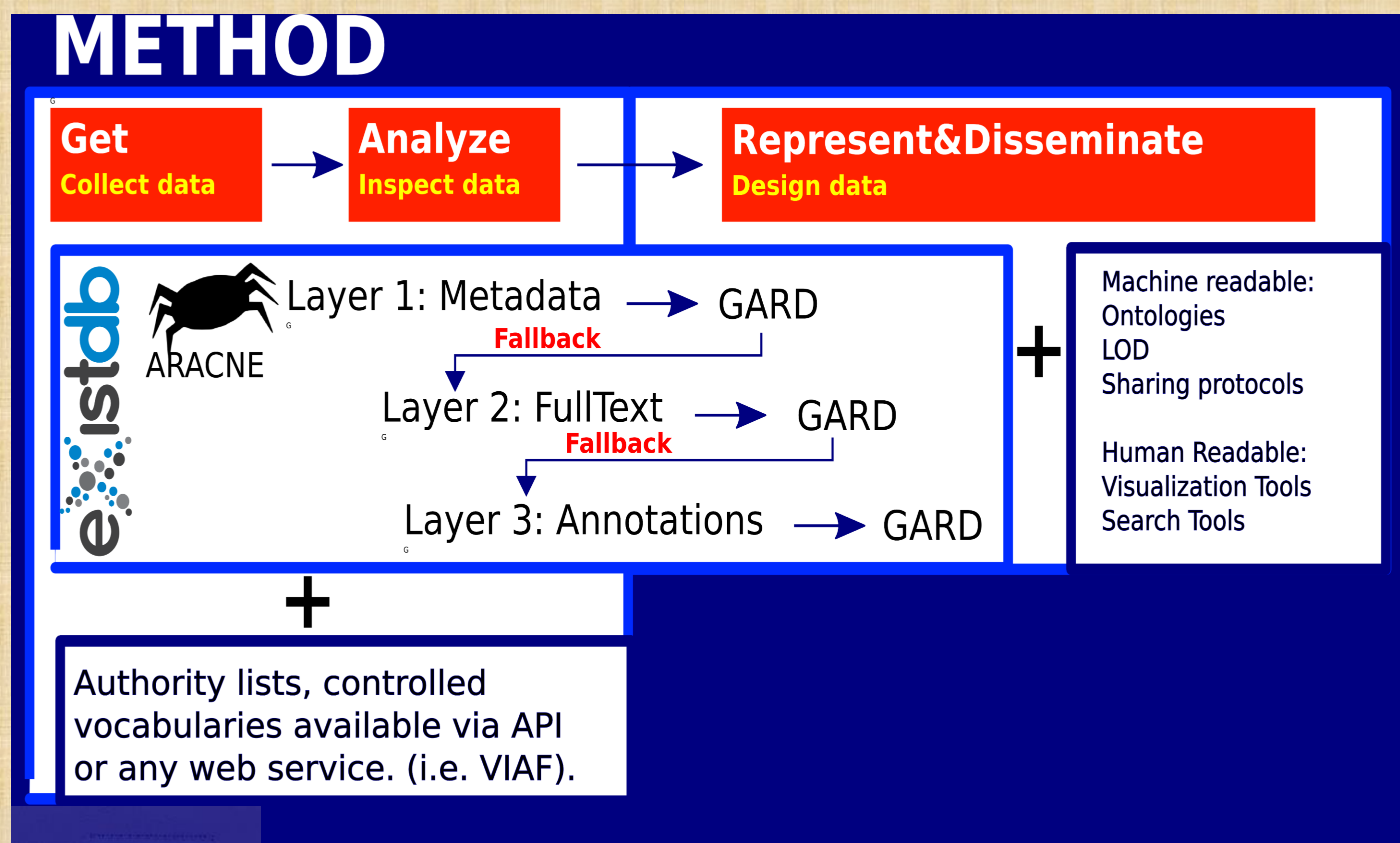
To execute these three phases, we will use the native XML-db application server eXist-db (http: //exist-db.org). The XML format used to store and index data is TEI. The choice to use an XML native db and TEI-XML format from the beginning, although less straightforward than others, will enable us to extend the metadata collected to the full-text at any time, without facing platform migrations.
For the collecting data phase (GET) the **ARACNE** framework (http: //www.aracne.unina.it) will be used: an open source software developed by the **Centro di Ateneo delle Biblioteche** (CAB) of our university for managing and publishing archival document collections in TEI-XML format in eXist-db.
For the next phases (analysis and representation & dissemination) we will use several open source tools (some embedded, some easily pluggable with eXist-db), such as: Apache Lucene (http: //lucene.apache.org) and Elastic search (https: //www.elastic.co/) to aggregate the data.
To publish the results in machine-readable format, to create linked data in the eXist-db API, and to project data in other formats (i.e. json, XML-DC) **Apache Jena** (https: //jena.apache.org) will be used. Furthermore, for human-readable results, **ARACNE**, which provides the possibility to create a website for a published archival collection, will be used.

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