Acta Sanctorum

What is Acta Sanctorum?

The Acta Sanctorum database is an electronic version of the complete printed text of Acta Sanctorum. It brings together materials on the lives of the saints from the beginning of the Christian era to the end of the sixteenth century, in critical editions with commentaries on the source documents. The material is organised according to each saint's feast day. The texts are extremely useful for the study of ecclesiastical history and provide an insight into the cultural history of the period.

It is possible to search Patrologia Latina at the same time as Acta Sanctorum. Patrologia Latina contains the works of the Church Fathers from Tertullian in 200 AD to the death of Pope Innocent III in 1216. Its coverage includes major and minor Latin authors and contains the most influential works of late ancient and early medieval theology, philosophy, history, and literature.

Accessing Acta Sanctorum

Acta Sanctorum is accessed via the E-resources Guide.

1. To open the E-resources Guide, go to: http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/e-resources
2. When the E-resources guide has opened select the A tab from the A-Z list at the top of the screen. An alphabetical list of resources is then displayed.
3. Click on Acta Sanctorum. You may be asked to log in with your IT Services username and password. The resource will now open in a new window.
4. Click on Search on the homepage. A new window will open, displaying the Acta Sanctorum search screen.

Searching Acta Sanctorum

The default search screen displays the Search All option. This allows you to combine different fields to make your search more specific.
Viewing your search results

Your results will display as an abbreviated list.

Printing and e-mailing your results

1. From the list of search results, click in the checkbox next to each reference you want to keep.
2. To display your selected references, click on Marked List in the menu to the left of the screen.
3. To print the list of references or the full text, use the print option in your web browser.
4. To e-mail the list of references, click on E-mail records. You have the option to add notes about each reference before sending the list. This can be a useful way of recording details about your search as the subject of your search might not be clear from the title information given.

Search tips

AND combines search terms so that each search result contains all of the terms. For example, pater and filius finds results that contain both terms.

OR combines search terms so that each search result contains at least one of the terms. For example pater or filius finds results that contain either term.

Wildcard (?) use a question mark to replace zero or one letter anywhere in a word, for example loc?s finds results that contain either locus or locys.

Truncation (*) use an asterisk to truncate (shorten) a word and find all the words made by adding letters to the end of it. For example, serpen* finds results that contain the terms serpens or serpentis or serpentaneus etc.

Further help

The online help sections in Acta Sanctorum provide detailed search tips and further information about the databases.