

# biber

## A backend bibliography processor for biblatex

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## 1 Important Changes

Please see the `Changes` file which accompanies Biber for the details on changes in each version. This section is just for important things like incompatible changes which users should be aware of.

### 1.0

The `--validate_structure` option is now called `--validate_datamodel`

### 0.9.9

The output format option `--graph` has been moved to a new option `--outformat`. The option `--graph` should now be specified as `--outformat=dot` and the `--dot_include` option should be used to specify the elements to include in the DOT output. For example:

```
biber --graph=section,field <file>
```

is now:

```
biber --outformat=dot --dot_include=section,field <file>
```

### 0.9.8

**The `sourcemap` option syntax has changed.** The syntax was too confusing. It is now simplified and more powerful. It uses a sequential processing model to apply mappings to an entry. See section [3.1.1](#).

### 0.9.7

**The user config file has a completely new format.** The reason for this is that the older `Config::General` format could not be extended to deal with more sophisticated features like per-datasource restrictions. An XML format is much better and in fact easier to understand. The old format of the `map` option (now called `sourcemap`) was rather confusing because of limitations in the old config file format. Please see section [3.1.1](#) and convert your config files to the new format.

### 0.9.6

**Matching of citation keys and datasource entry keys is now *case-sensitive*.** This is to enforce consistency across the entire Bib $\LaTeX$  and Biber processing chain. All of the usual referencing mechanisms in  $\LaTeX$  are case-sensitive and so is the matching in Bib $\LaTeX$  of citations to entries in the `.bbl` file generated by Biber. It is inconsistent and messy to enforce case-insensitivity in only Biber's matching of citations keys to datasource entry keys. If Biber detects what looks like a case mismatch between citation keys, it will warn you.

**Summary of warnings/errors is now a new format.** When Biber finishes writing the `.bbl`, it gives a summary count of errors/warnings. It used to do this in the same format as Bib $\TeX$ , for compatibility. Now it uses a more consistent and easier to parse format which matches all other Biber messages. Please note if you need to support Biber in an external tool. I have updated the notes on AU $\TeX$  support below to reflect this.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 About

Biber is conceptually a Bib $\TeX$  replacement for Bib $\LaTeX$ . It is written in Perl with the aim of providing a customised and sophisticated data preparation

backend for Biblatex. You do *not* need to install Perl to use Biber—binaries are provided for many operating systems via the main  $\text{\TeX}$  distributions ( $\text{\TeX}$ Live, Mac $\text{\TeX}$ , MiK $\text{\TeX}$ ) and also via download from SourceForge. Functionally, Biber offers a superset of  $\text{\BibTeX}$ 's capabilities but is tightly coupled with Biblatex and cannot be used as a stand-alone tool with standard `.bst` styles. Biber's role is to support Biblatex by performing the following tasks:

- Parsing data from data sources
- Processing cross-references, entry sets, related entries
- Generating data for name, name list and name/year disambiguation
- Structural validation according to Biblatex data model
- Sorting reference lists
- Outputting data to a `.bbl` for Biblatex to consume

## 2.2 Requirements

Biber is distributed primarily as a stand-alone binary and is included in  $\text{\TeX}$ Live, Mac $\text{\TeX}$  and MiK $\text{\TeX}$ . If you are using any of these distributions, you do not need any additional software installed to use Biber. You do *not* need a Perl installation at all to use the binary distribution of Biber<sup>1</sup>.

Biber's git repository is on github<sup>2</sup>. Biber's documentation, binary downloads and supporting files are on SourceForge<sup>3</sup> and this is the primary location for development releases, forums and bugfixes etc. Biber is included into  $\text{\TeX}$ Live, the binaries coming from SourceForge.

## 2.3 Compatibility Matrix

Biber versions are closely coupled with Biblatex versions. You need to have the right combination of the two. Biber will warn you during processing if it encounters information which comes from a Biblatex version which is incompatible. Table 1 shows a compatibility matrix for the recent versions.

## 2.4 License

Biber is released under the free software Artistic License 2.0<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>If you prefer, you can run Biber as a normal Perl program and doing this *does* require you to have a Perl interpreter installed. See section 4.

<sup>2</sup><https://github.com/plk/biber>

<sup>3</sup><http://sourceforge.net/projects/biblatex-biber/>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.opensource.org/licenses/artistic-license-2.0.php>

Biber version	Biblatex version
1.4	2.4
1.3	2.3
1.2	2.1, 2.2
1.1	2.1
1.0	2.0
0.9.9	1.7x
0.9.8	1.7x
0.9.7	1.7x
0.9.6	1.7x
0.9.5	1.6x
0.9.4	1.5x
0.9.3	1.5x
0.9.2	1.4x
0.9.1	1.4x
0.9	1.4x

Table 1: Biber/Biblatex compatibility matrix

## 2.5 History

`BIBTEX` has been the default (only ...) integrated choice for bibliography processing in `TEX` for a long time. It has well known limitations which stem from its data format, data model and lack of Unicode support<sup>5</sup>. The `.bst` language for writing bibliography styles is painful to learn and use. It is not a general programming language and this makes it really very hard to do sophisticated automated processing of bibliographies.

Biblatex was a major advance for `LATEX` users as it moved much of the bibliography processing into `LATEX` macros. However, Biblatex still used `BIBTEX` as a sorting engine for the bibliography and also to generate various labels for entries. `BIBTEX`'s capabilities even for this reduced set of tasks was still quite restricted due to the lack of Unicode support and the more and more complex programming issues involved in label preparation and file encoding.

Biber was designed specifically for Biblatex in order to provide a powerful backend engine which could deal with any required tasks to do with `.bbl` preparation. Its main features are:

- Deals with the full range of UTF-8
- Sorts in a completely customisable manner using, when available, CLDR collation tailoring

<sup>5</sup>In fact, there is now a Unicode version

- Allows for per-entrytype options
- Automatically encodes the `.bbl` into any supported encoding format<sup>6</sup>
- Processes all bibliography sections in one pass of the tool
- Output to GraphViz instead of `.bbl` in order to help visualise complex bibliographies with many crossrefs etc. (see section 3.9)
- Handles UTF-8 citekeys and filenames (given a suitable fully UTF-8 compliant  $\text{\TeX}$  engine)
- Creates entry sets dynamically and allows easily defined static entry sets, all processed in one pass
- ‘Syntactic’ inheritance via new `@XDATA` entrytype and field. This can be thought of as a field-based generalisation of the  $\text{\BibTeX}$  `@STRING` functionality (which is also supported).
- ‘Semantic’ inheritance via a generalisation of the  $\text{\BibTeX}$  crossreference mechanism. This is highly customisable by the user—it is possible to choose which fields to inherit for which entrytypes and to inherit fields under different names etc. Nested crossreferences are also supported.
- Handles complex auto-expansion and contraction of names and namelists (See section 4.11.4 of the Bibl $\text{\TeX}$  manual for an excellent explanation with examples, this is quite an impressive feature ...)
- Extensible modular data sources architecture for ease of adding more data source types
- Support for remote data sources
- User-definable mapping and suppression of fields and entrytypes in data sources. You can use this to, for example, ignore all `ABSTRACT` fields completely. See section 3.1.1
- Support for related entries, to enable generic treatment of things like ‘translated as’, ‘reprinted as’, ‘reprint of’ etc.
- Customisable labels
- Multiple bibliography lists in the same section with different sorting and filtering
- No more restriction to a static data model of specific fields and entrytypes
- Structural validation of the data against the data model with a customisable validation model

Figure 1 shows the main functional units of processing in Biber. The most difficult tasks which Biber performs are the processing of Bibl $\text{\TeX}$ ’s `uniquename` and `uniquelist` options<sup>7</sup>, the sorting of lists<sup>8</sup> and the initial data parse and

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<sup>6</sup>‘Supported’ here means encodings supported by the Perl `Encode` module

<sup>7</sup>A rather tricky unbounded loop but with a guaranteed eventual stable exit state.

<sup>8</sup>This is a complex, arbitrary multi-field Schwartzian Transform which has to deal with potentially different case and order settings for every field.

remap into an internal data model. Biber is getting on for around 20,000 lines of mostly OO Perl and relies on certain splendid Perl modules such as `Unicode::Collate`, `Text::BibTeX` and `XML::LibXML`.

It may be useful to know something about the different routes a data-source entry can take as it passes through Biber.

1. All cited entries which are subsequently found in a datasource are instantiated in the internal Biber data model.
2. Some uncited entries on which cited entries depend are instantiated in the internal Biber data model:
  - Entries with entrytype `@XDATA` which are referenced from cited entries.
  - Entries mentioned in the `CROSSREF` or `XREF` field of a cited entry (unless they are also cited themselves in which case they are already instantiated as per item 1 above).
  - Clones of entries mentioned as a ‘related’ entry of a cited entry.
  - Members of sets, either explicit `@SET` entrytype entries or dynamic sets.
3. Some uncited but instantiated entries are promoted to cited status so that they make it into the output:
  - Entries instantiated by being members of a set.
  - Entries instantiated by being mentioned as a `CROSSREF` are promoted to cited status if `CROSSREF`’ed or `XREF`’ed at least `mincrosref` times.
  - Clones of entries mentioned as a ‘related’ entry of a cited entry.
4. Some of these auto-cited entries have the ‘dataonly’ option set on them so that Biblatex will only use them for data and will not output them to the bibliography:
  - Clones of entries mentioned as a ‘related’ entry of a cited entry.

## 2.6 Performance

Biber can’t really be compared with `BibTeX` in any meaningful way performance-wise. Biber is written in Perl and does a *great* deal more than `BibTeX` which is written in C. One of Biber’s test cases is a 2150 entry, 15,000 line `.bib` file which references a 630 entry macros file with a resulting 160 or so page (A4) formatted bibliography. This takes Biber under 3 minutes to process on a reasonable computer. This is perfectly acceptable, especially for a batch program.

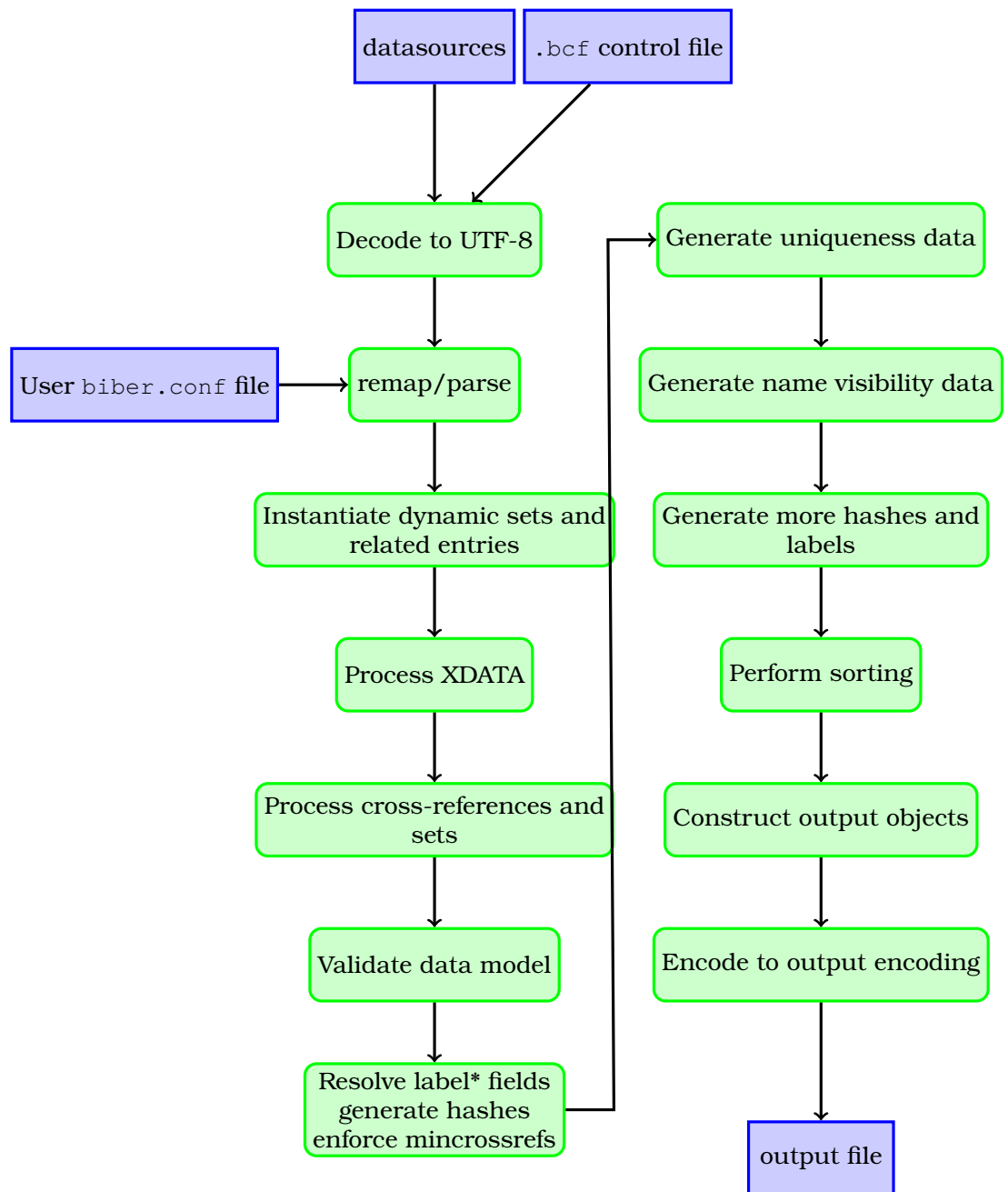


Figure 1: Overview of Biber's main functional units

## 2.7 Acknowledgements

François Charette originally wrote a first modest version of Biber. Philip Kime joined in the development in 2009 and is largely responsible for making it what it is today.

## 3 Use

Firstly, please note that Biber will *not* attempt to sanitise the content of BibTeX data sources. That is, don't expect it to auto-escape any TeX special characters like '&' or '%' which it finds in, for example, your TITLE fields. It used to do this in earlier versions in some cases but as of version 0.9, it doesn't because it's fraught with problems and leads to inconsistent expectations and behaviour between different data source types. In your BibTeX data sources, please make sure your entries are legal TeX code.

Running `biber --help` will display all options and a brief description of each. This is the most useful brief source of usage information. Biber returns an exit code of 0 on success or 1 if there was an error.

Most Biber options can be specified in long or short format. When mentioning options below, they are referred to as 'long form|short form' when an option has both a long and short form. As usual with such options, when the option requires an argument, the long form is followed by an equals sign '=' and then the argument, the short form is followed by a space and then the argument. For example, the `--configfile|-g` option can be given in two ways:

```
biber --configfile=somefile.conf
biber -g somefile.conf
```

With the `backend=biber` option, Biblatex switches its backend interface and passes all options and information relevant to Biber's operation in a control file with extension `.bcf`<sup>9</sup>. This is conceptually equivalent to the `.aux` file which L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X uses to pass information to BibTeX. The `.bcf` file is XML and contains many options and settings which configure how Biber is to process the bibliography and generate the `.bbl` file.

The usual way to call Biber is simply with the `.bcf` file as the only argument. Biblatex always writes the control file with a `.bcf` extension. Specifying the `'bcf'` extension to Biber is optional. Assuming a control file called `test.bcf`, the following two commands are equivalent:

```
biber test.bcf
biber test
```

---

<sup>9</sup>Biblatex Control File



### 3.1 Options and config file

Biblatex options which Biber needs to know about are passed via the `.bcf` file. See Table 2 for the Biblatex options which Biber uses and also for the scopes which are supported for each option. Biber also has its own options which are set using the following resource chain, given in decreasing precedence order:

command line options →  
  **biber.conf file** →  
    **.bcf file** →  
      Biber hard-coded defaults

Users do not need to care directly about the contents or format of the `.bcf` file as this is generated from the options which they specify via Biblatex. The config file is a place to set commonly used command-line options and also to set options which cannot be set on the command line.

The configuration file is by default called `biber.conf` but this can be changed using the `--configfile|-g` option. Unless `--configfile|-g` is used, the config file is looked for in the following places, in decreasing order of preference:

**biber.conf in the current directory** →  
  `$HOME/.biber.conf` →  
    `$XDG_CONFIG_HOME/biber/biber.conf` →  
      `$HOME/Library/biber/biber.conf` (Mac OSX only)  
      `$APPDATA/biber.conf` (Windows only) →  
        the output of ‘`kpsewhich biber.conf`’ (if available on the system)

The config file is XML. Here Below is an example config file which displays the Biber defaults:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<config>
  <bblencoding>UTF-8</bblencoding>
  <bibencoding>UTF-8</bibencoding>
  <bblsafechars>0</bblsafechars>
  <bblsafecharsset>base</bblsafecharsset>
  <collate>1</collate>
  <collate_options>
```

Biblatex option	Global	Per-type	Per-entry
alphaothers	✓	✓	
dataonly		✓	✓
inheritance	✓		
labelalpha	✓	✓	
labelalphatemplate	✓	✓	
labelnamespec	✓	✓	
labelnumber	✓	✓	
labeltitle	✓	✓	
labeltitleyear	✓	✓	
labeleyear	✓	✓	
labeleyearspec	✓	✓	
maxalphanames	✓	✓	✓
maxbibnames	✓	✓	✓
maxcitenames	✓	✓	✓
maxitems	✓	✓	✓
minalphanames	✓	✓	✓
minbibnames	✓	✓	✓
mincitenames	✓	✓	✓
minitems	✓	✓	✓
presort	✓	✓	✓
singletitle	✓	✓	
skipbib		✓	✓
skiplab		✓	✓
skiplos		✓	✓
sortalphaothers	✓	✓	
sortexclusion		✓	
sortfirstinits	✓		
sorting	✓		
structure	✓		
uniquelist	✓	✓	✓
uniqueusername	✓	✓	✓
useauthor	✓	✓	✓
useditor	✓	✓	✓
useprefix	✓	✓	✓
usetranslator	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Biblatex options which Biber uses

```

    <option name="level" value="4"/>
    <option name="variable" value="non-ignorable"/>
</collate_options>
<debug>0</debug>
<decodecharsset>base</decodecharsset>
<fastsort>0</fastsort>
<graph>0</graph>
<mincrossrefs>0</mincrossrefs>
<nodieonerror>0</nodieonerror>
<noinit>
  <!-- strip lowercase prefices like 'al-' when generating initials -->
  <option value="\b\p{Ll}{2}\p{Pd}"/>
  <!-- strip diacritics when generating initials -->
  <option value="[\x{2bf}\x{2018}]/>
</noinit>
<nolog>0</nolog>
<nostdmacros>0</nostdmacros>
<nosort>
  <!-- strip prefices like 'El-' when sorting name fields -->
  <option name="type_name" value="\A\p{L}{2}\p{Pd}"/>
  <!-- strip diacritics when sorting name fields -->
  <option name="type_name" value="[\x{2bf}\x{2018}]/>
</nosort>
<onlylog>0</onlylog>
<quiet>0</quiet>
<sortcase>true</sortcase>
<sortlocale>en_US.utf8</sortlocale>
<sortupper>true</sortupper>
<trace>0</trace>
<validate_config>0</validate_config>
<validate_control>0</validate_control>
<validate_structure>0</validate_structure>
<wraplines>0</wraplines>
</config>

```

In practice, the most commonly used options will be set via Biblatex macros in your document and automatically passed to Biber via the `.bcf` file. Certain options apply only to Biber and can only be set in the config file, particularly the more complex options. Most options are simple tags. Exceptions are the `nosort`, `noinit` and `collate_options` options which are slightly more complex and can have sub-options as shown. A much more complex option is the `sourcemap` option which is not set by default and which is described in section 3.1.1.

### 3.1.1 The sourcemap option

The data source drivers implement a mapping from data source entrytypes and fields into the Biblatex data model. If you want to override or augment the driver mappings you can use the `sourcemap` option which makes it possible to, for example, have a data source with non-standard entrytypes or fields and to have these automatically mapped into other entrytypes/fields without modifying your data source. Essentially, this alters the source data stream which Biber uses to build the internal Biblatex data model and is an automatic way of editing the datasource as it is read by Biber. This option is completely equivalent to the Biblatex `\DeclareSourcemap` macro which is in fact a per-document  $\LaTeX$  macro-based interface to exactly the same functionality (see the Biblatex manual).

Figure 2 is a graphical overview of the data flow for data model information. See Figure 1 for a more complete overview of Biber’s processing steps.

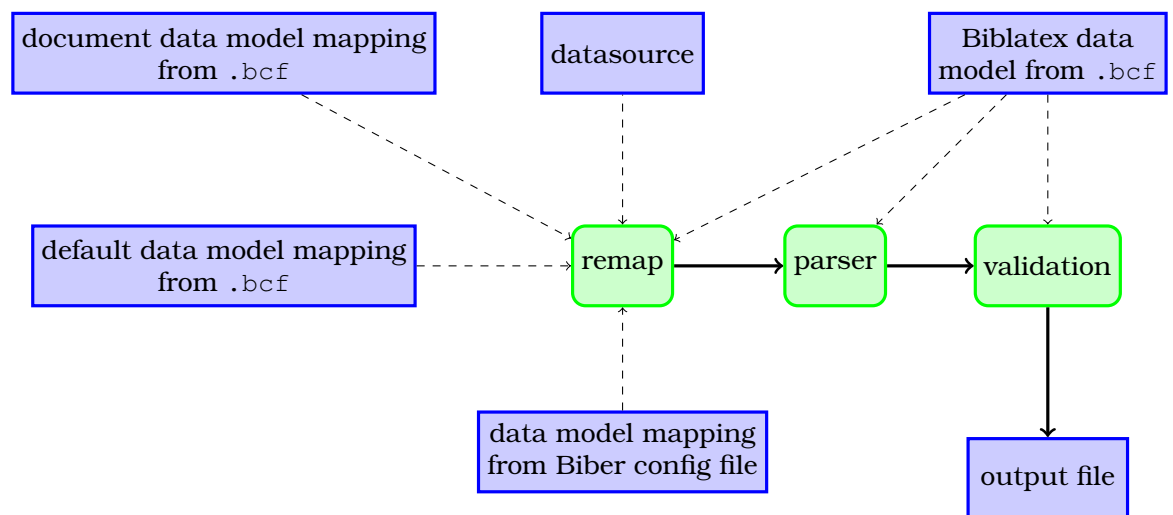


Figure 2: Model data flow in Biber

The `sourcemap` option can only be set in the config file and not on the command line as it has a complex structure. This option allows you to perform various data source mapping tasks which can be useful for pre-processing data which you do not generate yourself:

- Map data source entrytypes to different entrytypes.
- Map datasource fields to different fields.
- Add new fields to an entry
- Remove fields from an entry

- Modify the contents of a field using standard Perl regular expression match and replace.
- Restrict any of the above operations to entries coming from particular datasources which you defined in `\addresource{}` macros.
- Restrict any of the above operations to entries only of a certain entry-type.

There is in fact, more flexibility than the above suggests, examples will show this below. The format of the `sourcemap` option section in the config file is described below, followed by examples which will make things clearer. Items in **red** are not literal, they are descriptive meta-values which are explained in the accompanying text. Items in **blue** are optional within their parent section. The general structure is:

```
<sourcemap>
  <maps datatype="driver1" map_overwrite="1|0">
    <map1 map_overwrite="1|0"> ... </map1>
      ⋮
    <mapn map_overwrite="1|0"> ... </mapn>
  </maps>
  ⋮
  <maps datatype="drivern" map_overwrite="1|0">
    <map1 map_overwrite="1|0"> ... </map1>
      ⋮
    <mapn map_overwrite="1|0"> ... </mapn>
  </maps>
</sourcemap>
```

Here, `driver1...drivern` are the names of valid Biber data source drivers (see section 3.8). One thing to note here is the `map_overwrite` attribute. This boolean attribute determines whether, for this driver mapping section, you may overwrite existing fields when adding new fields or mapping them. This attribute can be overridden on a per-map basis, see below. A warning will be issued either way saying whether an existing field will or will not be overwritten. If omitted, it defaults to '0'.

The `map` elements are processed in sequence and contain a number of `map_steps` which are also processed in sequence. Each `map_step` allows you to do a particular thing or combination of things:

- Change the entrytype of an entry
- Change the name of a field
- Add extra fields the entry
- Change the contents of a field

These facilities are explained in more detail below, with examples. A map element looks like this:

```
<map map_overwrite="0|1">
  <per_datasource>datasource</per_datasource>
  <per_type>entrytype</per_type>
  <map_step map_type_source="source-entrytype"
            map_field_source="source-field"
            map_type_target="target-entrytype"
            map_field_target="target-field"
            map_match="match-regex"
            map_replace="replace-regex"
            map_field_set="set-field"
            map_field_value="set-value"
            map_append="1"
            map_null="1"
            map_origfield="1"
            map_origfieldval="1"
            map_origentrytype="1"
            map_final="1"/>
</map>
```

- If there are any **datasources** named in **per\_datasource** elements, this mapping only applies to entries coming from the named **datasources**. There can be multiple **per\_datasource** elements each specifying one of the datasource names given in a Biblatex `\addbibresource` macro.
- If there are any **entrytypes** named in **per\_type** elements, this mapping only applies to entries of the named **entrytypes**.
- The `map_overwrite` attribute can be used to override the value for this attribute set on the parent `maps` element. If omitted, it defaults to the parent `maps` attribute value.

Each `map_step` is looked at in turn and compared with the datasource entry being processed. A `map_step` works like this:

- Change the **source-entrytype** to **target-entrytype**, if defined. If **map\_final** is set then if the entrytype of the entry is not **source-entrytype**, processing of this `map` immediately terminates.
- Change the **source-field** to **target-field**, if defined. If **map\_final** is set, then if there is no **source-field** field in the entry, processing of this `map` immediately terminates.
- If **map\_match** is defined but **map\_replace** is not, only apply the step if the **source-field** matches **map\_match**. You can use parentheses as usual to capture parts of the match and can then use these later when setting a **map\_field\_value**.

- Perform a Perl regular expression match and replace on the value of `source-field` if `map_match` and `map_replace` are defined. You may use (and almost certainly will want to use) parentheses for back-references in `map_replace`. Do not quote the regular expressions in any special (i.e. non-Perl) way—it's not necessary.
- If `map_field_set` is defined, then its value is `set-field` which will be set to a value specified by further attributes. If `map_overwrite` is false for this step and the field to set already exists then the map step is ignored. If `map_final` is also set on this step, then processing of the parent map stops at this point. If `map_append` is set, then the value to set is appended to the current value of `set-field`. The value to set is specified by a mandatory one and only one of the following attributes:
  - `map_field_value` — The `set-field` is set to `set-value`
  - `map_null` — The field is ignored, as if it did not exist in the data-source
  - `map_origentrytype` — The `set-field` is set to the most recently mentioned `source-entrytype` name.
  - `map_origfield` — The `set-field` is set to the most recently mentioned `source-field` name
  - `map_origfieldval` — The `set-field` is set to the most recently mentioned `source-field` value

Note that for XML datasources (Endnote, Zotero RDF/XML etc.), the names of fields and entrytypes are matched in a case sensitive manner. For all other datasource types (BibTeX, RIS etc.) entrytype and field name matching is case insensitive.

Here are some examples:

```
<map>
  <per_datasource>example1.bib</per_datasource>
  <per_datasource>example2.bib</per_datasource>
  <map_step map_field_set="KEYWORDS" map_field_value="keyw1, keyw2"/>
</map>
```

This would add a KEYWORDS field with value 'keyw1, keyw2' to all entries which are found in either the `examples1.bib` or `examples2.bib` files. This assumes that the Biblatex source contains `\addresource{example1.bib}` and `\addresource{example2.bib}`.

```
<map map_overwrite="0">
  <map_step map_field_source="TITLE"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="NOTE" map_origfieldval="1"/>
</map>
```

Copy the TITLE field to the NOTE field unless the NOTE field already exists.

```
<map map_overwrite="0">
  <map_step map_field_source="AUTHOR" />
  <map_step map_field_set="SORTNAME" map_origfieldval="1" map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="SORTNAME" map_match="\A(.+?)\s+and.*"
map_replace="$1"/>
</map>
```

For any entry with an AUTHOR field, try to set SORTNAME to the same as AUTHOR. If this fails because SORTNAME already exists, stop, otherwise truncate SORTNAME to just the first name in the name list.

```
<map map_overwrite="0">
  <map_step map_type_source="CHAT" map_type_target="CUSTOMA" map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="TYPE" map_origentrytype="1"/>
</map>
```

Any @CHAT entrytypes would become @CUSTOMA entrytypes and would automatically have a TYPE field set to 'CHAT' unless the TYPE field already exists in the entry (because map\_overwrite is false). This mapping applies only to entries of type @CHAT since the first step has map\_final set and so if the map\_type\_source does not match the entry, processing of this map immediately terminates.

```
<map>
  <per_datasource>examples.bib</per_datasource>
  <per_type>ARTICLE</per_type>
  <per_type>BOOK</per_type>
  <map_step map_field_set="ABSTRACT" map_null="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="NOTE" map_field_value="Auto-created this field"/>
</map>
```

Any entries of entrytype ARTICLE or BOOK from the 'examples.bib' data-source would have their ABSTRACT fields removed and a NOTE field added with value 'Auto-created this field'.

```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_set="ABSTRACT" map_null="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="CONDUCTOR" map_field_target="NAMEA"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="GPS" map_field_target="USERA"/>
</map>
```

This removes ABSTRACT fields from any entry, changes CONDUCTOR fields to NAMEA fields and changes GPS fields to USERA fields



```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_source="PUBMEDID"
            map_field_target="EPRINT"
            map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="EPRINTTYPE" map_origfield="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="USERD"
            map_field_value="Some string of things"/>
</map>
```

Applies only to entries with PUBMED fields and maps PUBMEDID fields to EPRINT fields, sets the EPRINTTYPE field to 'PUBMEDID' and also sets the USERD field to the string 'Some string of things'.

```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_source="SERIES"
            map_match="\A\d* (.+)"
            map_replace="\L$1"/>
</map>
```

Here, the contents of the SERIES field have leading numbers stripped and the remainder of the contents lowercased.

```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_source="TITLE"
            map_match="Collected\s+Works.+Freud"
            map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="KEYWORDS" map_field_value="freud"/>
</map>
```

Here, if for an entry, the TITLE field matches a particular regular expression, we set a special keyword so we can, for example, make a references section just for certain items.

```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_source="LISTA" map_match="regexp" map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="LISTA" map_null="1"/>
</map>
```

If an entry has a LISTA field which matches regular expression 'regexp', then it is removed.

```
<map>
  <map_step map_field_source="AUTHOR"
            map_match="Smith, Bill" map_replace="Smith, William"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="AUTHOR"
            map_match="Jones, Baz" map_replace="Jones, Barry"/>
</map>
```

Here, we use multiple match/replace for the same field to regularise some inconstant name variants. Bear in mind that match/replace processing within a map element is sequential and the changes from a previous match/replace are already committed.

```
<map map_overwrite="1">
  <map_step map_field_source="AUTHOR" map_match="Doe," map_final="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="SHORTAUTHOR" map_origfieldval="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_set="SORTNAME" map_origfieldval="1"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="SHORTAUTHOR"
    map_match="Doe,\s*J(?:\.|ohn) (?:[-]*) (?:P\.|Paul) *"
    map_replace="Doe, John Paul"/>
  <map_step map_field_source="SORTNAME"
    map_match="Doe,\s*J(?:\.|ohn) (?:[-]*) (?:P\.|Paul) *"
    map_replace="Doe, John Paul"/>
</map>
```

Only applies to entries with an AUTHOR field matching 'Doe,'. First the AUTHOR field is copied to both the SHORTAUTHOR and SORTNAME fields, overwriting them if they already exist. Then, these two new fields are modified to canonicalise a particular name, which presumably has some variants in the datasource.

### Other datasource types

For data sources other than BibTEX, (e.g. ris, endnotexml and zoterordfxml), the source entrytypes and fields are usually very differently modelled and named. For example, here is how to drop dc:subject fields from various entrytypes in Zotero XML RDF format data sources:

```
<maps datatype="zoterordfxml" map_overwrite="1">
  <map>
    <per_type>journalArticle</per_type>
    <per_type>book</per_type>
    <per_type>bookSection</per_type>
    <map_step map_field_set="dc:subject" map_null="1"/>
  </map>
</maps>
```

Or here, mapping journal articles into @Report entries for Endnote XML format data sources within a particular data source.

```
<maps datatype="endnotexml" map_overwrite="1">
  <map>
    <per_datasource>endnote.xml</per_datasource>
    <map_step map_type_source="Journal Article" map_type_target="Report"/>
  </map>
</maps>
```

Or here, dropping the N2 field from RIS datasources, which are commonly used for abstracts:

```
<maps datatype="ris" map_overwrite="1">
  <map>
    <map_step map_field_set="N2" map_null="1"/>
  </map>
</maps>
```

### 3.1.2 The `noinit` option

The value of the `noinit` option can only be set in the config file and not on the command line. This is because the values are Perl regular expressions and would need special quoting to set on the command line. This can get a bit tricky on some OSes (like Windows) so it's safer to set them in the config file. `noinit` allows you to ignore parts of a name when generating initials. This is done using Perl regular expressions which specify what to ignore. You can specify multiple regular expressions and they will be removed from the name before it is passed to the initials generating system.

For example, this option can be used to ignore diacritic marks and prefixes in names which should not be considered when sorting. Given (the default):

```
<noinit>
  <!-- strip lowercase prefixes like 'al-' when generating initials -->
  <option value="\b\p{Ll}{2}\p{Pd}"/>
  <!-- strip diacritics when generating initials -->
  <option value="[\x{2bf}\x{2018}]/>
</noinit>
```

and the BibTeX data source entry:

```
AUTHOR = {{al-Hasan}, °Alī},
```

the initials for the last name will be 'H' and not 'a-H'. The initial for the first name will be 'A' as the diacritic is also ignored. This is tricky in general as you cannot often determine the difference between a name with a prefix and a hyphenated name with only, say, two chars in the first part such as 'Ho-Pun'. You can adjust this option for your individual cases. By default, only lowercased prefixes are looked for so as to avoid breaking things like 'Ho-Pun' where you want the initials to be 'H.-P.', for example. See the Perl regular expression manual page for details of the regular expression syntax<sup>10</sup>.

---

<sup>10</sup><http://perldoc.perl.org/perlre.html>

Alias	Fields
type_name	author afterword annotator bookauthor commentator editor editora editorb editorc foreword holder introduction namea nameb namec shortauthor shorteditor translator
type_title	booktitle eventtitle issuetitle journaltitle maintitle origtitle title

Table 3: `nosort` option field type aliases

### 3.1.3 The `nosort` option

The value of the `nosort` option can only be set in the config file and not on the command line. This is because the values are Perl regular expressions and would need special quoting to set on the command line. This can get a bit tricky on some OSes (like Windows) so it's safer to set them in the config file. In any case, it's unlikely you would want to set them for particular Biber runs; they would more likely be set as your personal default and thus they would naturally be set in the config file anyway. `nosort` allows you to ignore parts of a field for sorting. This is done using Perl regular expressions which specify what to ignore in a field. You can specify as many patterns as you like for a specific field. Also available are some field type aliases so you can, for example, specify patterns for all name fields or all title fields. These field types all begin with the string `'type_'`, see Table 3.

For example, this option can be used to ignore diacritic marks and prefixes in names which should not be considered when sorting. Given (the default):

```
<nosort>
  <!-- strip prefixes like 'al-' when sorting names -->
  <option name="type_name" value="\A\p{L}{2}\p{Pd}"/>
  <!-- strip diacritics when sorting names -->
  <option name="type_name" value="[\x{2bf}\x{2018}]/>
</nosort>
```

and the BibTeX data source entry:

```
AUTHOR = {{al-Hasan}, °Alī},
```

the prefix ‘al-’ and the diacritic ‘°’ will not be considered when sorting. See the Perl regular expression manual page for details of the regular expression syntax<sup>11</sup>.

You may specify any number of `option` elements. If a `nosort` option is found for a specific field, it will override any option for a type which also covers that field.

Here is another example. Suppose you wanted to ignore ‘The’ at the beginning of a `TITLE` field when sorting, you could add this to your `biber.conf`:

```
<nosort>
  <option name="title" value="\AThe\s+"/>
</nosort>
```

If you wanted to do this for all title fields listed in Table 3, then you would do this:

```
<nosort>
  <option name="type_title" value="\AThe\s+"/>
</nosort>
```

**Note:** `nosort` can be specified for most fields but not for things like dates and special fields as that wouldn’t make much sense.

### 3.1.4 The `collate_options` option

The `collate_options` option has format similar to `nosort`. See Section 3.4 for details about the option, here is an example of a config file setting:

---

<sup>11</sup><http://perldoc.perl.org/perlre.html>

```

<collate_options>
  <option name="level" value="3"/>
  <option name="table" value="/home/user/data/otherkeys.txt"/>
</collate_options>

```

## 3.2 Input/Output File Locations

### 3.2.1 Control file

The control file is normally passed as the only argument to Biber. It is searched for in the following locations, in decreasing order of priority:

Absolute filename →

In the `--output_directory`, if specified→

Relative to current directory→

Using `kpsewhich`, if available

### 3.2.2 Data sources

Local data sources of type ‘file’ are searched for in the following locations, in decreasing order of priority:

Absolute filename →

In the `--output_directory`, if specified→

Relative to current directory→

In the same directory as the control file→

Using `kpsewhich` for supported formats, if available

Remote file data sources (beginning with `http://` or `ftp://`) are retrieved to a temp file and processed as normal. Users do not specify explicitly the bibliography database files; they are passed in the `.bcf` control file, which is constructed from the Biblatex ‘`\addbibresource{}`’ macros.

## 3.3 Logfile

By default, the logfile for Biber will be named `\jobname.blg`, so, if you run

```
biber <options> test.bcf
```

then the logfile will be called 'test.blg'. Like the .bbl output file, it will be created in the `--output_directory|-c`, if this option is defined. You can override the logfile name by using the `--logfile` option:

```
biber --logfile=lfname test.bcf
```

results in a logfile called 'lfname.blg'.

**Warning:** be careful if you are expecting Biber to write to directories which you don't have appropriate permissions to. This is more commonly an issue on non-Windows OSes. For example, if you rely on `kpsewhich` to find your database files which are in system  $\text{\TeX}$  directories, you may well not have write permission there so Biber will not be able to write the .bbl. Use the `--outfile|-O` option to specify the location to write the .bbl to in such cases.

### 3.4 Collation and Localisation

Biber takes care of collating the bibliography for Biblatex. It writes entries to the .bbl file sorted by a completely customisable set of rules which are passed in the .bcf file by Biblatex. Biber has two ways of performing collation:

`--collate|-C`

The default. This option makes Biber use the Perl `Unicode::Collate` module for collation which implements the full UCA (Unicode Collation Algorithm). It also has CLDR (Common Locale Data Repository) tailoring to deal with cases which are not covered by the UCA. It is a little slower than `--fastsort|-f` but the advantages are such that it's rarely worth using `--fastsort|-f`

`--fastsort|-f`

Biber will sort using the OS locale collation tables. The drawback for this method is that special collation tailoring for various languages are not implemented in the collation tables for many OSes. For example, few OSes correctly sort 'å' before 'ä' in the Swedish (`sv_SE`) locale. If you are using a common latin alphabet, then this is probably not a problem for you.

The locale used for collation is determined by the following resource chain which is given in decreasing precedence order:

```

--collate_options|-c (e.g. -c 'locale => "de_DE"') →
--sortlocale|-l →
    LC_COLLATE environment variable →
    LANG environment variable →
    LC_ALL environment variable

```

With the default `--collate|-C` option, the locale will be used to look for a collation tailoring for that locale. It will generate an informational warning if it finds none. This is not a problem as the vast majority of collation cases are covered by the standard UCA and many locales neither have nor need any special collation tailoring.

With the `--fastsort|-f` option, the locale will be used to locate an OS locale definition to use for the collation. This may or may not be correctly tailored, depending on the locale and the OS.

Collation is by default case sensitive. You can turn this off globally using the Biber option `--sortcase=false` or from Biblatex using its option `sortcase=false`. The option can also be defined per-field so you can sort some fields case sensitively and others case insensitively. See the Biblatex manual.

`--collate|-C` by default collates uppercase before lower. You can reverse this globally for all sorting using the Biber option `--sortupper=false` or from

Biblatex by using its option `sortupper=false`. The option can also be defined per-field so you can sort some fields uppercase before lower and others lower before upper. See the Biblatex manual. Be aware though that some locales rightly enforce a particular setting for this (for example, Danish). You will be able to override it but Biber will warn you if you do. `sortupper` has no effect when using `--fastsort|-f`—you are at the mercy of what your OS locale does.

There are in fact many options to `Unicode::Collate` which can tailor the collation in various ways in addition to the locale tailoring which is automatically performed. Users should see the the documentation to the module for the various options, most of which the vast majority of users will never need<sup>12</sup>. Options are passed using the `--collate_options|-c` option as a single quoted string, each option separated by comma, each key and value separated by `'=>'`. See examples.

---

<sup>12</sup>For details on the various options, see <http://search.cpan.org/search?query=Unicode%3A%3ACollate&mode=all>



**Note:** Biber sets the Unicode collation tailoring ‘variable’ to ‘non-ignorable’. Effectively, this means that punctuation is not ignored when sorting. The default setting is to ignore such ‘variable weight’ elements. Sorting bibliographies is slightly more specialised than collating general text and punctuation often matters. In case you want the UCA default behaviour, see examples.

### 3.4.1 Examples

```
biber
    Call Biber using all settings from the .bcf generated from the  $\LaTeX$  run.
    Case sensitive UCA sorting is performed taking the locale for tailoring from
    the environment if no sortlocale is defined in the .bcf
biber --sortlocale=de_DE
    Override any locale setting in the .bcf or the environment.
biber --fastsort
    Use slightly quicker internal sorting routine. This uses the OS locale files
    which may or may not be accurate.
biber --sortcase=false
    Case insensitive sorting.
biber --sortupper=false --collate_options="backwards => 2"
    Collate lowercase before upper and collate French accents in reverse order
    at UCA level 2.
biber --collate_options="variable => 'shifted'"
    Use the UCA default setting for variable weight punctuation (which is to
    ignore it for sorting, effectively).
```

### 3.5 Encoding of files

Biber takes care of re-encoding the data source data as necessary. In normal use, Biblatex passes its `bibencoding` option value to Biber via the `.bcf` file. It also passes the value of its `texencoding` option (which maps to Biber’s `--bblencoding|-E` option) the default value of which depends on which  $\TeX$  engine and encoding packages you are using (see Biblatex manual for details).

Biber performs the following tasks:

1. Decodes the data source into UTF-8 if it is not UTF-8 already
2. Decodes  $\LaTeX$  character macros into UTF-8 if `--bblencoding|-E` is UTF-8
3. Encodes the output so that the `.bbl` is in the encoding that `--bblencoding|-E` specifies

4. Warns if it is asked to output to the .bbl any UTF-8 decoded  $\LaTeX$  character macros which are not in the `--bblencoding|-E` encoding. Replaces with a suitable  $\LaTeX$  macro

Normally, you do not need to set the encoding options on the Biber command line as they are passed in the .bcf via the information in your Biblatex environment. However, you can override the .bcf settings with the command line. The resource chain for encoding settings is, in decreasing order of preference:

```
--bibencoding|-e and --bblencoding|-E →
  Biber config file →
    .bcf control file
```

### 3.5.1 $\LaTeX$ macro decoding

As mentioned above, Biber sometimes converts  $\LaTeX$  character macros into UTF-8. In fact there are two situations in which this occurs.

1. When `--bblencoding|-E` is UTF-8
2. Always for internal sorting purposes

This decoding is very useful but take note of the following two scenarios, which relate to each of the two situations in which  $\LaTeX$  macro decoding occurs:

#### Decoding when output is UTF-8

If you are using PDF $\LaTeX$  and `\usepackage[utf8]{inputenc}`, it is possible that the UTF-8 characters resulting from Biber's internal  $\LaTeX$  character macro decoding break `inputenc`. This is because `inputenc` does not implement all of UTF-8, only a commonly used subset.

An example—if you had `\DJ` in your .bib data source, Biber decodes this correctly to ‘Đ’ and this breaks `inputenc` because it doesn't understand that UTF-8 character. The real solution here is to switch to a  $\TeX$  engine with full UTF-8 support like Xe $\TeX$  or Lua $\TeX$  as these don't use or need `inputenc`. However, you can also try the `--bblsafechars` option which will try to convert any UTF-8 chars into  $\LaTeX$  macros on output. For information on the `--bblsafechars` option, see section 3.5.2.

#### Decoding for internal sorting

If your `bblencoding` is not UTF-8, and you are using some UTF-8 equivalent  $\LaTeX$  character macros in your .bib data source, then some .bbl

fields (currently only `\sortinit{}`) might end up with invalid characters in them, according to the `.bbl` encoding. This is because some fields must be generated from the final sorting data which is only available after the  $\LaTeX$  character macro decoding step.

For example, suppose you are using PDF $\LaTeX$  with `\usepackage[latin1]{inputenc}` and the following Bib $\TeX$  data source entry:

```
@BOOK{citekey1,
  AUTHOR = {{\v S}imple, Simon},
}
```

With normal  $\LaTeX$  character macro decoding, the `{\v S}` is decoded into ‘Š’ and so with name-first sorting, `\sortinit{}` would be ‘Š’. This is an invalid character in `latin1` encoding and so the `.bbl` would be broken. In such cases when `\sortinit{}` is a char not valid in the `bblencoding`, Biber tries to replace the character with a suitable  $\LaTeX$  macro. The solution is really to use UTF-8 `.bbl` encoding whenever possible. In extreme cases where even with UTF-8 encoding, the char is not recognised by  $\LaTeX$  due to an incomplete UTF-8 implementation (as with `inputenc`), this might also mean switching  $\TeX$  engines to one that supports full UTF-8 (like Xe $\TeX$  or Lua $\TeX$ ).

### 3.5.2 $\LaTeX$ macro encoding

The opposite of decoding; converting UTF-8 characters into  $\LaTeX$  macros. You can force this with the `--bblsafechars` option which will do a generally good job of making your `.bbl` plain ASCII. It can be useful in certain edge cases where your bibliography introduces characters which can’t be handled by your main document. See section 3.5.1 above for an example such case.

A common use case for  $\LaTeX$  macro encoding is when the bibliography data source is not ASCII but the `.tex` file is and so this case is automated for you: if the Bib $\LaTeX$  option ‘`texencoding`’ (which corresponds to the Biber option ‘`--bblencoding|-E`’) is set to an ASCII encoding (‘`ascii`’ or ‘`x-ascii`’) and ‘`--bibencoding|-e`’ is not ASCII, Biber will automatically set `--bblsafechars`.

See also the biber `--help` output for the `--bblsafecharsset` and `--decodecharsset` options which can customise the set of conversion rules to use. The characters and macros which Biber maps during encoding and decoding are documented<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup><https://sourceforge.net/projects/biblatex-biber/files/biblatex-biber/1.4/documentation/utf8-macro-map.html>

### 3.5.3 Examples

```
biber
    Set bibencoding and bblencoding from the config file or .bcf
biber --bblencoding=latin2
    Encode the .bbl as latin2, overriding the .bcf
biber --bblsafechars
    Set bibencoding and bblencoding from the config file or .bcf. Force en-
    coding of UTF-8 chars to  $\LaTeX$  macros using default conversion set
biber --bblencoding=ascii
    Encode the .bbl as ascii, overriding the .bcf. Automatically sets --bblsafechars
    to force UTF-8 to  $\LaTeX$  macro conversion
biber --bblencoding=ascii --bblsafecharsset=full
    Encode the .bbl as ascii, overriding the .bcf. Automatically sets --bblsafechars
    to force UTF-8 to  $\LaTeX$  macro conversion using the full set of conversions
biber --decodecharsset=full
    Set bibencoding and bblencoding from the config file or .bcf. Use the full
     $\LaTeX$  macro to UTF-8 conversion set because you have some more obscure
    character macros in your .bib data source which you want to sort correctly
biber -u
    Shortcut alias for biber --bibencoding=UTF-8
biber -U
    Shortcut alias for biber --bblencoding=UTF-8
```

## 3.6 Editor Integration

Here is some information on how to integrate Biber into some of the more common editors

### 3.6.1 Emacs

Emacs has the powerful AUCT $\TeX$  mode for editing T $\TeX$  and running compilations. Updated files for AUCT $\TeX$  11.86 are available here:

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/biblatex-biber/files/auctex-biber.zip>

Drop the .el files in the .zip file over the ones in your AUCT $\TeX$  installation tree, delete the corresponding .elc files and run `M-0 M-x byte-recompile-directory` and give the path of your AUCT $\TeX$  main install directory where the new files

reside. Hopefully these modifications will make it into the official AUCT<sub>E</sub>X distributions soon.

The additions augment AUCT<sub>E</sub>X in the following ways:

- Adds font-lock support for most Bibl<sub>a</sub>tex macros
- Auto-detects whether you are using Biber with Bibl<sub>a</sub>tex
- Can detect whether dependencies like data sources have changed without them being open in Emacs
- Understands Bibl<sub>a</sub>tex and Biber messages so that AUCT<sub>E</sub>X will prompt you with the best default command to run next when using `C-cC-c`

### 3.6.2 T<sub>E</sub>Xworks

It's very easy to add Biber support to T<sub>E</sub>Xworks. In the Preferences, select the Typesetting tab and then add a new Processing Tool as in Figure 3.

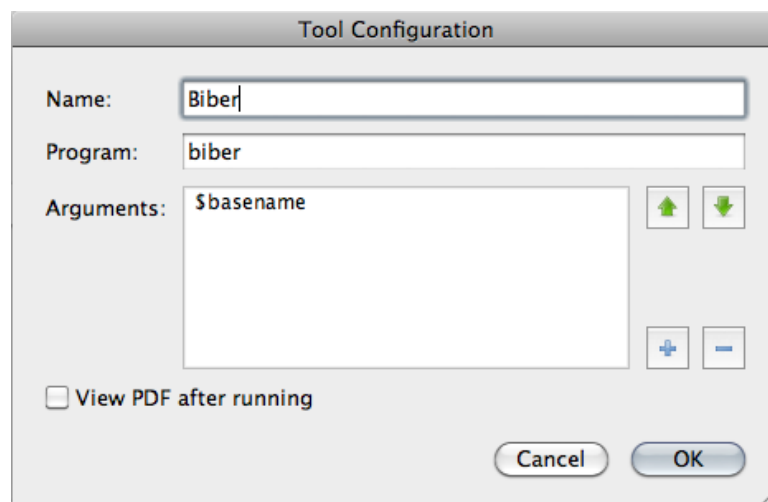


Figure 3: Screenshot of T<sub>E</sub>Xworks processing tool setup for Biber

### 3.7 B<sub>I</sub>B<sub>T</sub><sub>E</sub>X macros and the MONTH field

B<sub>I</sub>B<sub>T</sub><sub>E</sub>X defines macros for month abbreviations like ‘jan’, ‘feb’ etc. Biber also does this, defining them as numbers since that is what Bibl<sub>a</sub>tex wants. In case you are also defining these yourself (although if you are only using Bibl<sub>a</sub>tex, there isn't much point), you will get macro redefinition warnings from the `btparse` library. You can turn off Biber's macro definitions to avoid this by using the option `--nostdmacros`.

Biber will look at any `MONTH` field in a `BibTeX` data source and if it's not a number as Biblatex expects (because it wasn't one of the macros as mentioned above or these macros were disabled by `--nostdmacros`), it will try to turn it into the right number in the `.bbl`. If you only use Biblatex with your `BibTeX` data source files, you should probably make any `MONTH` fields be the numbers which Biblatex expects.

### 3.8 Biber data source drivers

Biber uses a modular data source driver model to provide access to supported data sources. The drivers are responsible for mapping driver entrytypes and fields to the Biblatex data model according to a data model specification in the Biblatex file `blx-dm.def`. The data model can be changed using Biblatex macros in case you would like to, for example, use your own entrytype or field names or perhaps have Biber do some validation on your data sources (see the Biblatex manual).

Data model mapping is an imprecise art and the drivers are the necessarily the most messy parts of Biber. Most data source models are not designed with typesetting in mind and are usually not fine-grained enough to provide the sorts of information that Biblatex needs. Biber does its best to obtain as much meaningful information from a data source as possible. Currently supported data sources drivers are:

- `BibTeX` — `BibTeX` data files
- `endnotexml` — Endnote XML export format, version  $\geq$  Endnote X1
- `ris` — Research Information Systems format
- `zoterordfxml` — Zotero RDF XML format, version 2.0.9

### 3.9 Visualising the Output

The option `--outputformat=dot` will cause Biber to write a GraphViz<sup>14</sup> `.dot` file instead of a `.bbl`. This file graphs the bibliographic data as it exists after all processing. You can transform this file using the `dot` program from GraphViz to generate a high quality graphical representation of the data in a format of your choice. A good output format choice with `dot` is SVG<sup>15</sup> which can be viewed in any modern web browser. This format has the advantage of tooltips and Biber uses these to give you more information on connections between entries: hover the cursor on an arrow in the output and it will tell you what it means. To output in SVG, use this command after installing GraphViz:

---

<sup>14</sup><http://www.graphviz.org>

<sup>15</sup>Scalable Vector Graphics

Sub-option	Description
crossref	Show crossreference relationships
field	Show fields within entries
related	Show related entries and clones
section	Show sections
xdata	Show XDATA relationships
xref	Show XREF relationships

Table 4: Valid sub-options for the `dot_include` option

```
dot -Tsvg <file>.dot -o <file>.svg
```

The `--dot_include` option takes a comma delimited string as argument. The elements of this string define the information to include in the `.dot` output graph. The valid sub-options are shown in Table 4. If the `--dot_include` option is not given then the default setting is implicitly used, which is:

```
--dot_include=crossref,section,xdata,xref
```

### 3.10 Extended BibTeX Datasource Field Format

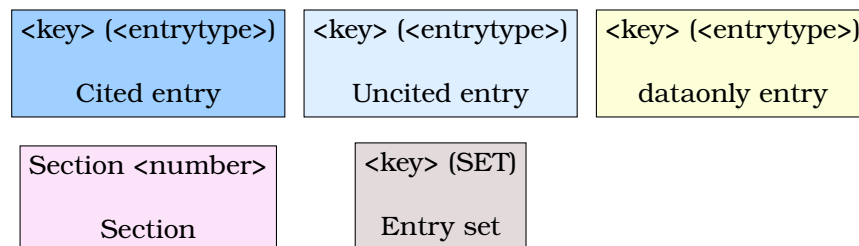
Biber implements an extended BibTeX datasource format which allows users to specify the script form and language for a field. In this way, it is possible to include several variants of a field in an entry which give the field in different script forms (translated, romanised etc.) with an option in cases of forms like translated forms, to specify the language. This allows users within Biblalex to access such data when formatting entries. The extended field format looks like this:

```
<field>_<form>_<lang>
```

Both `<form>` and `<lang>` are optional, naturally and if they are not present, default to 'default' and 'original'. respectively. `<lang>`, if specified, should be a known babel language identifier. `<form>` can be one of:

- original (default if ommitted)
- translated
- romanised
- uniform

For example:



A  $\xrightarrow{\text{B inherits by CROSSREF from A}}$  B

A  $\xrightarrow{\text{B inherits by XREF from A}}$  B

A  $\xrightarrow{\text{B inherits by XDATA from A}}$  B

A  $\xrightarrow{\text{A is a related entry of B}}$  B

A  $\xrightarrow{\text{B is a clone of A}}$  B

Figure 4: Key to .dot output format



```
@BOOK{example1,
  AUTHOR          = {, and , },
  AUTHOR_translated_english = {Bulgakov, Pavel and Rosenfeld, Boris},
  TITLE           = {},
  TITLE_romanised  = {gwóng jàù wá},
}
```

## 4 Binaries

Biber is a Perl application which relies heavily on quite a few modules. It is packaged as a stand-alone binary using the excellent `PAR::Packer` module which can pack an entire Perl tree plus dependencies into one file which acts as a stand-alone binary and is indistinguishable from such to the end user. You can also simply download the Perl source and run it as a normal Perl program which requires you to have a working Perl 5.14+ installation and the ability to install the pre-requisite modules. You would typically only do this if you wanted to keep up with all the bleeding-edge git commits before they had been packaged as a binary. Almost all users will not want to do this and should use the binaries from their  $\text{\TeX}$  distribution or downloaded directly from SourceForge in case they need to use a more recent binary than is included in their  $\text{\TeX}$  distribution.

The binary distributions of Biber are made using the Perl `PAR::Packer` module. They can be used as a normal binary but have some behaviour which is worth noting:

- Don't be worried by the size of the binaries. `PAR::Packer` essentially constructs a self-extracting archive which unpacks the needed files first.
- On the first run of a new version (that is, with a specific hash), they actually unpack themselves to a temporary location which varies by operating system. This unpacking can take a little while and only happens on the first run of a new version. **Please don't kill the process if it seems to take some time to do anything on the first run of a new binary.** If you do, it will not unpack everything and it will almost certainly break Biber. You will then have to delete your binary cache (see section 4.1 below) and re-run the Biber executable again for the first time to allow it to unpack properly.

## 4.1 Binary Caches

PAR: :Packer works by unpacking the required files to a cache location. It only does this on the first run of a binary by computing a hash of the binary and comparing it with the cache directory name which contains the hash. So, if you run several versions of a binary, you will end up with several cached trees which are never used. This is particularly true if you are regularly testing new versions of the Biber binary. It is a good idea to delete the caches for older binaries as they are not needed and can take up a fair bit of space. The caches are located in a temporary location which varies from OS to OS. The cache name is:

```
par-<hex_encoded_username>/cache-<hash> (Linux/Unix/OSX)
par-<hex_encoded_username>\cache-<hash> (Windows)
```

The temp location is not always obvious but these are sensible places to look (where \* can vary depending on username):

- /var/folders/\*/\*/\*/\* (OSX, local GUI login shell)
- /var/tmp/ (OSX (remote ssh login shell), Unix)
- /tmp/ (Linux)
- C:\Documents and Settings\<username>\Local Settings\Temp (Windows/Cygwin)
- C:\Windows\Temp (Windows)

To clean up, you can just remove the whole `par-<hex_encoded_username>` directory/folder and then run the current binary again. You can see the active cache by running biber with the `--cache` option which will print the current cache location and exit.

## 4.2 Binary Architectures

Binaries are available for many architectures, directly on SourceForge and also via TeXLive:

- linux\_x86\_32
- linux\_x86\_64
- MSWin32
- cygwin32
- darwin\_x86\_64
- darwin\_x86\_i386

- `freebsd_x86`<sup>16</sup>
- `freebsd_amd64`<sup>16</sup>
- `solaris_x86`<sup>16</sup>

If you want to run development versions, they are usually only regularly updated for the core architectures which are not flagged as third-party built above. If you want to regularly run the latest development version, you should probably git clone the relevant branch and run Biber as a pure Perl program directly.

## 4.3 Installing

These instructions only apply to manually downloaded binaries. If Biber came with your  $\text{\TeX}$  distribution just use it as normal.

Download the binary appropriate to you OS/arch<sup>17</sup>. Below I assume it's on your desktop.

You have to move the binary to somewhere in you command-line or  $\text{\TeX}$  utility path so that it can be found. If you know how to do this, just ignore the rest of this section which contains some instructions for users who are not sure about this.

### 4.3.1 OSX

If you are using the  $\text{\TeX}$ Live Mac $\text{\TeX}$  distribution:

```
sudo mv ~/Desktop/biber /usr/texbin/
sudo chmod +x /usr/texbin/biber
```

If you are using the MacPorts  $\text{\TeX}$ Live distribution:

```
sudo mv ~/Desktop/biber /opt/local/bin/
sudo chmod +x /opt/local/bin/biber
```

The ‘`sudo`’ commands will prompt you for your password.

---

<sup>16</sup>Binary maintained by third party. See README in binary download directory for this platform for support/contact details. Usually, the binary maintainer is also the binary build provider for  $\text{\TeX}$ Live.

<sup>17</sup><https://sourceforge.net/projects/biblatex-biber>

### 4.3.2 Windows

The easiest way is to just move the executable into your `C:\Windows` directory since that is always in your path. A more elegant is to put it somewhere in your  $\text{\TeX}$  distribution that is already in your path. For example if you are using MiK $\text{\TeX}$ :

```
C:\Program Files\MiKTeX 2.9\miktex\bin\
```

### 4.3.3 Unix/Linux

```
sudo mv ~/Desktop/biber /usr/local/bin/biber
sudo chmod +x /usr/local/bin/biber
```

Make sure `/usr/local/bin` is in your `PATH`. Search Google for ‘set `PATH` linux’ if unsure about this. There are many pages about this, for example: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/unix-linux-adding-path/>

## 4.4 Building

Instructions for those who want/need to build an executable from the Perl version. For this, you will need to have Perl 5.14+ with the following modules:

- All Biber pre-requisites
- `PAR::Packer` and all dependencies

You should have the latest CPAN versions of all required modules as Biber is very specific in some cases about module versions and depends on recent fixes in many cases. You can see if you have the Biber Perl dependencies by the usual

```
perl ./Build.PL
```

invocation in the Biber Perl distribution tree directory. Normally, the build procedure for the binaries is as follows<sup>18</sup>:

- Get the Biber source tree from SF and put it on the architecture you are building for
- `cd` to the root of the source tree
- `perl Build.PL` (this will check your module dependencies)
- `Build test`

---

<sup>18</sup>On Unix-like systems, you may need to specify a full path to the scripts e.g. `./Build`

- `Build install` (may need to run this as `sudo` on Unix-like systems)
- `cd dist/<arch>`
- `build.sh` (`build.bat` on Windows)

This leaves a binary called `'biber-<arch>'` (also with a `'.exe'` extension on Windows/Cygwin) in your current directory. The tricky part is constructing the information for the build script. There are two things that need to be configured, both of which are required by the `PAR::Packer` module:

1. A list of modules/libraries to include in the binary which are not automatically detected by the `PAR::Packer` dependency scanner
2. A list of extra files to include in the binary which are not automatically detected by the `PAR::Packer` dependency scanner

To build Biber for a new architecture you need to define these two things as part of constructing new build scripts:

- Make a new sub-folder in the `dist` directory named after the architecture you are building for. This name is arbitrary but should be fairly obvious like `'solaris-sparc-64'`, for example.
- Copy the `biber.files` file from an existing build architecture into this directory.
- For all of the files with absolute pathnames in there (that is, ones we are not pulling from the Biber tree itself), locate these files in your Perl installation tree and put the correct path in the file.
- Copy the build script from a vaguely similar architecture (i.e. Windows/non-Windows ...) to your new architecture directory.
- Change the `--link` options to point to where the required libraries reside on your system.
- Change the `--output` option to name the resulting binary for your architecture.
- Run the build script

The `--link` options can be a little tricky sometimes. It is usually best to build without them once and then run `ldd` (or OS equivalent) on the binary to see which version/location of a library you should link to. You can also try just running the binary and it should complain about missing libraries and where it expected to find them. Put this path into the `--link` option. The `--module` options are the same for all architectures and do not need to be modified. On architectures which have or can have case-insensitive file systems, you should use the build script from either Windows or OSX as a reference as these include a step to copy the main Biber script to a new name before packing the binary. This is required as otherwise a spurious

error is reported to the user on first run of the binary due to a name collision when it unpacks itself.

See the PAR wiki page<sup>19</sup> for FAQs and help on building with `PAR::Packer`. Take special note of the FAQs on including libraries with the packed binary<sup>20</sup>.

#### 4.4.1 Testing a binary build

You can test a binary that you have created by copying it to a machine which preferably doesn't have `perl` at all on it. Running the binary with no arguments will unpack it in the background and display the help. To really test it without having  $\text{\LaTeX}$  available, get the two quick test files from SourceForge<sup>21</sup>, put them in a directory and run Biber in that directory like this:

```
biber --validate_control --convert_control test
```

This will run Biber normally on the test files plus it will also perform an XSLT transform on the `.bcf` and leave an HTML representation of it in the same directory thus testing the links to the XML and XSLT libraries as well as the  $\text{\LaTeX}$  parsing libraries. The output should look something like this (may be differences of Biber version and locale of course but there should be no errors or warnings).

```
INFO - This is Biber 1.4
INFO - Logfile is 'test.blg'
INFO - BibLaTeX control file 'test.bcf' validates
INFO - Converted BibLaTeX control file 'test.bcf' to 'test.bcf.html'
INFO - Reading 'test.bcf'
INFO - Found 1 citekeys in bib section 0
INFO - Processing bib section 0
INFO - Looking for BibTeX format file 'test.bib' for section 0
INFO - Found BibTeX data file 'test.bib'
INFO - Decoding LaTeX character macros into UTF-8
INFO - Sorting list 'MAIN' keys
INFO - No sort tailoring available for locale 'en_GB.UTF-8'
INFO - Sorting list 'SHORTHANDS' keys
INFO - No sort tailoring available for locale 'en_GB.UTF-8'
```

---

<sup>19</sup>[http://par.perl.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://par.perl.org/wiki/Main_Page)

<sup>20</sup><http://par.perl.org/wiki/FAQ>, section entitled 'My PAR executable needs some dynamic libraries'

<sup>21</sup><https://sourceforge.net/projects/biblatex-biber/files/biblatex-biber/testfiles>

```
INFO - Writing 'test.bbl' with encoding 'UTF-8'  
INFO - Output to test.bbl
```

**There should now be these new files in the directory:**

```
test.bcf.html  
test.blg  
test.bbl
```