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Modification of RLIN Hebraica Records: A Cataloging Workshop*

Current Practices and Standards of Cataloging Hebraica in RLIN

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Abstract: Since 1988, approximately 21 institutions have input Hebraica records into RLIN utilizing its Hebrew script capability. These institutions have varying standards for the amount of Hebrew script and Romanization that they provide. Some institutions provide vernacular access only for the core fields that have been defined by RLIN; others provide vernacular access for main and added entries, notes, and subject headings as well. Some institutions do not provide Romanization for the statement of responsibility or beyond the title proper. These institutions have varying financial, technical, and policy constraints that have contributed to this diversity of procedures for inputting vernacular records and for vernacular enhancement of already existing copy. In the papers from the AJL 1993 Convention session on "Modification of RLIN Hebraica Records," we share in each other's experiences in creating and modifying RLIN Hebraica script records.

Background

In 1988, a new development occurred in online cataloging of Hebraica in the United States. The Research Libraries Group made available a Hebrew character set in the RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) database, which enables a cataloger to transcribe bibliographic data in an online record in vernacular Hebrew script (Aliprand, 1986; 1989). Bibliographic information that can be transcribed includes the title statement (245 field), edition statement (250 field), imprint data (260 field), and series statement (440 field). This is information that is cited in AACR2 (*Anglo-American Cataloging Rules*, 1988) rule 1.0 as requiring

transcription in the original script whenever possible. These fields have been defined by RLIN as core fields and are the only fields that are required by RLIN to include romanized and vernacular data if it exists when a library uses the Hebrew script enhancement. Catalogers also have the option of providing additional Hebrew script access to main and/or added entries, notes, subject headings, and series tracings. Vernacular script fields appear as linked fields to the romanized data that are required by current MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) conventions. Libraries can add Hebrew script to records cataloged originally or records derived from online copy.

The New York Public Library was the first institution to have staff trained in using the RLIN Hebrew script capability. Other libraries, including the Library of Congress, Yale University Library, Brandeis University Libraries, and Stanford University Libraries, soon followed. Today approximately 25 libraries in the United States and Europe are producing RLIN records with the Hebrew script enhancement.

Hebrew Script Access in RLIN: Economies and Standards

As institutions catalog new Hebraica materials, catalog backlogs, or automate older catalogs, decisions must be made as to whether Hebrew script access should be made available to technical staff processing these materials and/or reference staff and patrons who may be searching for them. The decision to provide vernacular script access traditionally depends on the following factors: the library automation system utilized by the cataloging agency, whether the cataloging agency feels that providing vernacular access sufficiently benefits library staff and patrons, whether the added cost of providing vernacular script access is affordable, and whether it represents a break with past cataloging practices, thus requiring extensive recataloging of materials.

In 1992, as Stanford University and its library were confronted with the financial challenges endemic to the 1990s, the library's catalog department decided to reexamine its commitment to providing vernacular Hebrew script access to RLIN records. I was asked by my colleagues to find out about current cataloging practices of Hebraica by large academic and Judaica libraries that were using a large national database (i.e., OCLC or RLIN). A detailed report on the study is in Lerner (1993); the results are summarized here.

I sent out an informal survey which revealed that these libraries exercise one of the following options:

1. catalog into RLIN and utilize its Hebrew script capability;
2. catalog into RLIN and do not utilize its Hebrew script capability;
3. catalog into OCLC, which does not offer a Hebrew script capability;
4. catalog into a local online system, such as NOTIS or GEAC, that does not support Hebrew script and which provides tapes or uploads into RLIN or OCLC; or
5. catalog into a local online database that supports Hebrew script, such as ALEPH.

Institutions exercising options 2-4 (respondents included the libraries of the Universities of Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington, Arizona, Texas at Austin, Columbia, Harvard, and California at Los Angeles and Berkeley) all recognize the desirability of vernacular access, but feel that the added costs of providing Hebrew script fields outweigh the benefits. Since many Hebraica items in the national databases are already cataloged without Hebrew script fields, extra work would be required for copy catalogers to enhance these available records with Hebrew script. Librarians in this category also felt that transliteration problems are not insurmountable, a point made by Vernon (1991).

*Panel session held at the 28th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, New York, June 22, 1993.

Libraries that are cataloging directly into RLIN and utilizing its Hebrew script capability, or a local system (i.e., ALEPH) that supports Hebrew script (respondes included the libraries of Yale University, University of Michigan, New York University School of Law, Yeshiva University, University of Judaism, Brandeis University, Spertus College of Judaica, Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Annenberg Research Institute, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ohio State University, and the New York Public Library) have all expressed a commitment to continue to provide Hebrew script access. This panel focuses on the institutions cataloging into RLIN.

These institutions have varying standards for the amount of Hebrew script data that they include in an RLIN record and the amount of romanization that they provide. Some institutions provide Hebrew script access only for the core fields that have been required by RLG (the Research Libraries Group) for full cataloging in RLIN. (For a discussion of the core fields, see Aliprand, 1986, pp. 9–10). Others provide access in Hebrew script for main and/or added entries, notes, and subject headings as well. Some institutions do not provide romanization for the statement of responsibility (subfield c of the 245 field in the MARC record) or beyond the title proper (i.e., they do not provide romanization of "other title" information in subfield b of the 245 field), and the cataloging category (CC value) must reflect the fact that these are not full-level records. The cost of providing full romanization and vernacular access is not small, but institutions participating in RLIN have made the decision to contribute to our national shared database.

Stanford University is not primarily a Judaica research institution, and my colleagues in the catalog department questioned the value and expense of adding Hebrew script fields to RLIN records. Providing Hebrew script access goes beyond current cataloging standards and seemed a luxury at a time when Stanford librarians were looking at ways to decrease access to other materials. I emphasized to them the unique problems faced by patrons searching for Hebraica materials and pointed out that Stanford has a new and expanding Jewish Studies department with a growing staff and student body who need accurate and reliable access to this body of materials. The decision was made that the original cataloger would continue to catalog Hebraica according to guidelines that had been developed by the catalog department in

1988, to ensure our ongoing contribution to the national database. Since it was found that approximately two-thirds of Hebraica with available copy in RLIN was already enhanced with Hebrew script fields, the impact on the copy catalog department of adding Hebrew script to the remaining records would not be too great, and the decision was made that we would continue to include vernacular fields in RLIN records.

The copy cataloger accepts copy with vernacular fields "as is" and does not modify or upgrade them to conform with Stanford's guidelines for transcribing vernacular data. If Hebraica items with copy lack vernacular fields, the copy cataloger provides vernacular access only for the title proper (subfield a of the 245 field), and a corporate or personal main entry if it is easily discernible in Hebrew script from the piece in hand.

Most public online catalogs and local library systems in the United States do not yet support Hebrew script, and thus Hebrew-script access must be provided by other means, e.g., via card files. But we are hopeful that a vernacular capability will become available in an American system within a few years. Prior to Stanford's decision to input RLIN records enhanced with Hebrew script, Stanford University Libraries had cataloged very little Hebraica; so, if and when our online catalog does support a Hebrew character set, almost our entire Hebraica collection could be retrieved through vernacular searches, and little "retrospective conversion" would be required.

Most institutions hope to find at least some form of usable copy or bibliographic data to lessen the time required to romanize or key in data. It is much easier to enhance an existing RLIN record by adding vernacular fields than to input an entirely new record, and we are all grateful for the many thousands of romanized Hebraica records that currently exist in the database. As our libraries expand Hebraica collections and acquire new materials, and as we automate our card catalogs, our need for resource sharing will grow. If libraries do not have to provide cataloging for huge bodies of material, they will be able to absorb the costs of providing enhancements such as vernacular access more easily. There is currently great variation in Hebraica cataloging practice. We need to articulate very specific and realistic standards—beyond the minimum requirements—if institutions are going to accept a cooperative solution to cataloging Hebraica. (Weinberg (1988, p. 19) sug-

gested such an approach for retrospective conversion of Hebraica; the same principles apply to current cataloging.

We are all affected by the changing economic climate in the United States. Institutional and library administrators are cautious in implementing changes that can have an effect on time and costs. But as librarians we need to make ourselves aware of developments in technology and resource sharing that can have an impact on the use of nonroman scripts in library systems. Applications software packages for the business and academic communities that use bit-mapped graphics and loadable fonts are proliferating. It is natural that library staff and patrons will expect to see such technologies applied to their applications as well. Unfortunately, such technologies are not yet available in most libraries, and the RLIN bibliographic database now provides the most widely-used source for Hebrew script access to catalogs in the United States.

In the papers that follow, five librarians from American Judaica and academic institutions discuss standards or guidelines that their institutions have developed for original cataloging of Hebraica in RLIN, and how they work with records already existing in the database.

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Modifications Made by the New York Public Library to RLIN Hebraica Records*

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Abstract: In its Hebraica cataloging on RLIN, the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library aims for a complete "9114" cataloging category (CC) record, as specified by the Research Libraries Group. Derived records with a CC value of "9994", signifying a lower level of cataloging quality, are enhanced by romanizing field 245 ‡b, i.e., "other title" information. Field 245 ‡c (statement of responsibility) can remain unromanized, for the author's name in Latin characters appears in field 1xx (main entry). Complete collation, appropriate subject headings, added entries and notes deemed necessary to describe a book's contents are added. Three figures illustrating these points accompany the text.

*Paper presented as part of the panel session, "Modification of RLIN Hebraica Records: A Cataloging Workshop," held at the 28th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, New York, June 22, 1993.

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Heidi G. Lerner received her M.L.S. from the Graduate School of Library and Archive Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in 1982. Since 1987 she has worked in the archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace as a cataloger of political posters, and in the Catalog Department of the Stanford University Libraries as a cataloger of Hebraica and Judaica. At present she is cataloging the Taube-Baron Collection of Jewish History and Culture. Ms. Lerner helped to found the Northern California Chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries and serves as the chapter's Vice-President.

Institutional Context

When the New York Public Library (NYPL) catalog was automated in 1972 (for details see Dienstag, 1981), it was the policy of the Jewish Division to fight for Hebrew character enhancement, rather than Library of Congress (LC) romanization, by implementing the American National Standards Institute Z39 one-to-one reversible romanization (ANSI, 1975). Then when we began to catalog into RLIN (the Research Libraries Information Network), we fought for Hebrew-character enhancement so that we could input parallel fields in the original script along with LC romanization.

Even though NYPL's in-house catalog, CATNYP, does not have nonroman display capability, we have continued with our policy of inputting full and complete Hebrew records, to the extent possible.

NYPL's Hebraica Cataloging Standards

Our aim is to input complete "9114" cataloging category (CC) records as defined by the Research Libraries Group (see note). An example of an original NYPL Hebraica record coded 9114 is in Figure 1.

We do make some modifications in line with changes in standards that have been contemplated in the course of the last few years, such as assigning a parallel MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) tag 1xx (main entry) for a non-parallel vernacular form of entry, i.e., where the Roman heading is not a systematic romanization of the Hebrew heading.

In deriving records with a CC value of "9994" (the second position of 9 indicates that the record does not meet any RLG level of cataloging, and the third position of 9 indicates that the record does not meet any RLG level of content designation), we aim to provide a romanized MARC field 245 (title statement), including ‡a (title proper) and ‡b (remainder of

title); ‡c, the statement of responsibility, can remain unromanized because we input the author's name in Latin characters in field 1xx (main entry) or in field 7xx (added entries). An NYPL record illustrating these points is in Figure 2.

Although some catalogers have argued that romanization need not be provided beyond the title proper—following the LC Hebraica card model, we romanize subtitle, field 245 ‡b, because in so many instances this element is descriptive of the nature of the book itself.

To derived records we add, as required: complete collation, appropriate subject headings, added entries, and notes deemed necessary to fully describe the nature of the book's contents and to aid the reader in the choice and use of the volume. The enhancement of a derived record is illustrated in Figure 3.

Note

The cataloging category, or CC value, is a required four-digit numeric code identifying the level of RLIN or NYPL authority control; the level of cataloging under which the record was prepared; the level of content designation contained in the record; and the original source of the machine-readable record.

An example of a CC value is 9114. The first position was never implemented, so the value is always 9. The second position of 1 indicates that the record meets RLG's full level of cataloging. A 9 in this position indicates that the record does not meet any RLG level of cataloging.

The third position of 1 indicates that the record meets RLG's full level of content designation, item in hand. A 9 in this position indicates that the record does not meet any RLG level of content designation.

The fourth position of 4 indicates that the original source of the machine-readable record is RLG member cataloging (input online).

Source: *RLIN Supplement to USMARC Bibliographic Format: Fixed Fields* (Mountain View, CA.: Research Libraries Group, August 1991).