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To the Editor

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Commentaries

To the Editor:

The special issue of LRTS entitled "What in the World . . . Cataloging on an International Scale" was both interesting and informative. I am writing to correct an imprecise statement in one of the papers (Aliprand 2000). On page 165 the author states: "LC practice is to always transcribe Hebrew unvocalized, even when vowels and marks of pronunciation (which are positioned on consonontal [sic] letters) appear on the source of information." (My reason for writing this letter is not to point out the split infinitive or the misspelling of consonantal in the quoted sentence.)

The sentence describes current LC practice accurately, but the conclusion of the paragraph—"So we've never been 100% faithful"—suggests that omitting Hebrew vowel points and diacritics has always been LC practice. As I pointed out in a survey of Anglo-American Hebraica cataloging practices that was originally presented at an international conference (Weinberg 1992, 14), LC used to faithfully transcribe [split infinitives sound good sometimes] vowel points from the title pages of Hebrew books (see figure 1).

The authors of a recent book on Hebrew cataloging (Lazinger and Adler 1998, 102-105) discuss this issue in the context of the interpretation of AACR2R rule 1.1B1 (1988, 18), which states, "Give accentuation and other diacritical marks that are present in the chief source of information." In two chapters, Lazinger and Adler (1998, 103, 162) quote a relevant point from the introduction to the proposed Hebraic character set for RLIN (Weinberg 1985): "[T]his proposal features a full set of vowel points and diacritics. . . . These special characters, are included . . . to enable the cataloger to record them when they occur in the work being cataloged." Since Ms. Aliprand is the staff member of the Research Libraries Group (RLG) who worked on implementing a complete Hebrew character set in RLIN, I am confi-

Rabinowitz, Shalom₁ 1859–1916.

פונ'ם יאריד· לעבענסבבעשרייבוננגען· ניו יארק,
פערלאג „וואָרהײט", 1916

v. front. (port.) 20½ᶜᵐ.

At head of title author's pseudonym שלום עליכם.
Title transliterated: Fun'm jarid.

1. Yiddish language—Texts.

16-14359

Library of Congress   PJ5165.R3
Copyright A 434393

₁Rabinowitz, Shalom₁ 1859–1916.

חַיֵּי אָדָם· תרגום י·ד·ברקוביץ ··· ניריורק,הוצאת
א. י· שטיבל, תר"פ·

₁New York, The Stybel publishing house, 1920₁

3 v. front. (ports.) 19½ᶜᵐ.

Author's pseud. שלום־עליכם at head of title.
Title transliterated: Ḥayye adam.

1. Berkowitz, Isaac Dob, 1885–   tr.

21-778

Library of Congress
Copyright A 604972–604974   ₁2₁

₁Rabinowitz, Shalom₁ 1859–1916.

··· אין אַמעריקא· מאָטעל פײסי דעם חזנ'ם און
אַנדערע מעשיות· ניו יארק, פערלאָג „וואָרהײט", 1918·

246 p. front. (port.) 20½ᶜᵐ. $1.00

Author's pseudonym, שלום עליכם, at head of title.
Title transliterated: In America.

18-7527

Library of Congress
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Figure 1. Library of Congress catalog card featuring vowel points and diacritics transcribed from Hebrew and Yiddish title pages.

Source: A Catalog of books represented by Library of Congress printed cards issued to July 31, 1942. Paterson, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1963. Vol. 122, 317.

dent that she would want the historical record set straight. The relevant principle from RLG's work on non-Roman scripts is: "The character set must allow a cataloger to transcribe bibliographic data as fully and accurately as possible" (Aliprand 1987, 6). Ms. Aliprand modestly did not cite any of her prior papers on RLIN character sets or UNICODE.

The inclusion of vowel points and diacritics for languages such as Hebrew and Arabic is important to confirm the accuracy of Romanization, which may still be required in cataloging after Unicode becomes widely available. As veteran catalogers know, we often return to cataloging principles and practices that have been abandoned. One of the recommendations made at the Library of Congress's Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control, held in November 2000, was "Explore steps to make AACR2 more truly international in scope and application." Perhaps in light of this recommendation, the Library of Congress will return to its policy of being faithful to the title page in regard to the transcription of vowel points and diacritics for consonantal scripts. —

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Lazinger, Susan S., and Elhanan Adler, eds. *Cataloging Hebrew materials in the online environment: A comparative study of American and Israeli approaches.* Englewood, Co.: Libraries Unlimited, 1998.

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