

From Copy Cataloging to Derived Bibliographic Records: Cataloging and its Automation in American Judaica Research Libraries from the Sixties through the Eighties

Bella Hass Weinberg

The subject on which I have been invited to speak is "Technical Services [in Judaica research libraries]." The term is sometimes used in a sense that excludes cataloging and covers acquisitions and physical processing of materials (Magrill & Rinehart, 1977, p. x). I have, therefore, assigned a specific title to this paper to clarify its scope and to indicate the thrust of my presentation.

It would be nice if the initial paper of this conference gave all of you the chance to sit back and listen to a review of the accomplishments of the Judaica research library community in the area of technical services; in my view, however, Judaica research librarians cannot point to many major achievements in cataloging, which for the most part has been derivative rather than creative. With respect to cataloging codes and rules, we have reacted rather than initiated proposals. I shall attempt to prove this thesis with respect to five topics: Romanization; cataloging codes; subject analysis and classification; shared cataloging; and computerization.

It is my purpose to challenge this assemblage of decision makers for Judaica research libraries to devote greater attention to Judaica cataloging — not to view it as unnecessary overhead. The management-efficiency approach that states, Copy any available record without questioning it, is not in the best interests of our special user communities.

Two types of Judaica library directors are in attendance here: heads of independent Judaica research libraries and heads of Judaica departments of university and general research libraries. In the former type of library, decisions on cataloging and classification policy are made locally; in the latter, Judaica catalogers are constrained by the general policy of the institution. And yet, there are examples of "resistance" — of the Judaica department's preserving original alphabet access in a completely Romanized library or maintaining a special classification scheme for Judaica.

My remarks and challenges are thus directed at all those responsible for administering Judaica research collections, regardless of institutional setting.

Romanization

The most significant issue in Hebraica cataloging in recent decades has been the question of original alphabet vs. Romanization. Judaica research libraries have predominantly opposed Romanization of Hebrew bibliographic data, even though the only Hebrew access point provided in the catalogs of most of these libraries is Hebrew title (Weinberg, 1980, p. 327).

In the late 1970s, when OCLC's and the Library of Congress's plans for providing non-Roman scripts in computerized cataloging did not materialize, there appeared to be a threat that Hebrew bibliographic data would be provided by the Library of Congress in Romanization only. A resolution opposing this, formulated in 1977, was approved by both the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) and the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies (CARLJS) (Zipin, 1984, p. 53).

John Eilts, Program Officer for Middle Eastern Studies of the Research Libraries Group, pointed out that the activism of Judaica librarians on the issue of Romanization yielded significant results: LC's continued production of printed Hebrew cards as well as its current use of the Hebraic capability of the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). I had asked Mr. Eilts at the February 1988 CARLJS meeting why no one was using RLIN's Cyrillic capability. He responded, "Slavic librarians killed Cyrillic," and added that if Judaica librarians had not insisted on original Hebrew script, total Romanization would have been the rule for that alphabet as well.

The resolution to LC had made a case for reversible Romanization of Hebrew as an interim solution until a Hebrew script capability in an automated environment could be developed. Meetings were held at the Library of Congress on this question, but the proposal was never implemented. LC did, however, continue to supply printed Hebraica cards while inputting fully Romanized records into the MARC (machine-readable cataloging) database.

The question of reversible Romanization resurfaced recently when it became known that RLIN demanded parallel Romanization

of the core fields of Hebrew bibliographic records (Aliprand, 1987, p. 12). Proponents of the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) reversible scheme (ANSI, 1975, pp. 14-15) argued that it required a lower level of linguistic knowledge, and hence was less time-consuming to apply, than LC's phonetic transcription, which is officially known as the ALA/LC (American Library Association/Library of Congress) Romanization scheme (LC, 1976).

Although I helped draft the AJL/CARLJS resolution on Romanization, which proposed reversible Romanization of Hebrew in machine-readable bibliographic records, I did not support use of this scheme in parallel Romanization of Hebraic records in RLIN for three reasons: (1) reversible Romanization should be only a temporary solution to the unavailability of Hebrew characters; (2) reversible Romanization would be redundant to the Hebrew bibliographic data in RLIN, and if useful to those with Roman-only terminals, should be generated automatically; (3) the use of reversible Romanization by some libraries and ALA/LC Romanization by others would create a split in the Hebraic subset of the RLIN database in which the Romanized data is the basis for *clustering* or matching records. Apparently, many Judaica librarians shared this view, and RLG's committee on bibliographic standards did not approve an alternative Romanization standard for Hebrew.

Assessing the Romanization issue, I conclude that Judaica librarians have won the battle and lost the war. We have a Hebraic capability in a major bibliographic utility, but are now required to do more Romanization than ever before, using a system with complex rules that assume sophisticated knowledge of Hebrew grammar. LC asks us to master classical Hebrew grammar, and then disregard it in certain cases where Israeli pronunciation differs, e.g., for *sheva na* (Maher, 1987, pp. 16-18). LC's publication of a guide to its Hebraica cataloging and Romanization rules is welcome, but this booklet reveals the complexity of LC Romanization, while documenting the many changes that have occurred in LC's transcription of Hebrew, rendering older catalog copy incorrect.

Cataloging Codes

The past quarter-century has witnessed the implementation of two cataloging codes in American libraries — the first and second editions of *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* (AACR, 1967 and AACR2, 1978). Judaica libraries have followed the dictates of these codes for the most part, in some cases closing their catalogs and starting new ones because radical changes in rules have made interfiling of old and new headings impossible.

We do not have time in this session to delve into the intricacies of cataloging rules. The main point to be made about the most recent cataloging code, AACR2, is that Judaica librarians did not play a role in its development, although the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) was invited to do so. Instead, we have been reacting to rules we disliked.

This type of protest has been effective in several cases in which it was channeled through the Cataloging Committee of AJL. The greatest victory was on the issue of systematic Romanization of Hebraic surnames vs. the form given in the work. Judaica librarians preferred the latter, and the Joint Steering Committee on AACR modified the rule to make systematic Romanization the last choice in the flow chart for establishing Hebraic author name headings (Berger & Wachs, 1985).

When a cataloging rule is changed, LC generally does not go back and revise headings established according to previous rules, which leads to inconsistency in our catalogs and confusion on the part of our users. I believe that Judaica catalogs have been affected to a greater extent than general catalogs by rule changes, superimposition, desuperimposition, and similar examples of LC vacillation.

The Judaica library community should be represented on the committees that make cataloging codes and revise them. This involves a commitment of time and travel funds on the part of the administrators of our libraries, but it is a commitment that I believe would ultimately pay off.

Cataloging rules have proliferated and changed at a frightening rate in recent years, especially because of the AACR2 rule interpretations of the Library of Congress. In the fall of 1988, we expect publication by the American Library Association of *The Integrated AACR2*, which will incorporate all rule changes approved by the Joint Steering Committee on AACR, but regrettably not LC commentary on the basic code of cataloging "law."

Judaica research libraries need catalogers who are well versed not only in all these rules but in the subtleties of LC Romanization. Library schools are certainly not teaching the latter and are barely covering the basics of descriptive cataloging. On-the-job training is expensive; moreover, the recruitment problem is serious (Berger, 1988). Raising salaries would help to attract qualified Judaica catalogers, who are often lured away by better-paying library specialties. Administrators of Judaica libraries should take a look at a recent issue of *Cataloging Service Bulletin* and contemplate the overwhelming number of rules and details that the cataloger must observe. This, added to the special subject and linguistic knowledge demanded of the Judaica cataloger, warrants recognition of his or her expertise in the form of a salary commensurate with that of other professions that require such skills and graduate education.

Classification and Subject Analysis

In the past two decades most Judaica research libraries have shifted from special Judaica classification schemes to that of the Library of Congress, although one would be hard pressed to find a Judaica librarian who considers LC Classification (LCC) a good one for Rabbinics, Jewish history, the Holocaust, or Jewish bibliography. The reason for the adoption of LCC by Judaica libraries is generally economic: the availability of centrally assigned complete class numbers that can be copied.

The timing of the change of classification scheme in many libraries coincided with the publication of AACR and the closing of their catalogs. In the late 1960s, adoption of LCC was a trend that swept the library landscape, and Judaica research libraries jumped on the bandwagon. The rationale generally given was "adoption of national standards," but actually, almost no Judaica research library uses LCC without modification. I have pointed out in a recent article that there is an element of self-deception in adopting a standard classification scheme and making extensive local modifications to it — which is tantamount to maintaining a special scheme (Weinberg, 1987, p. 47). A systematic analysis and comparison of specialized Judaica classification schemes in academic libraries has not, to my knowledge, been done (except in library school student term papers), nor has there been a comparative cost study of maintaining a local Judaica classification scheme vs. modifying a national one. This type of research needs to be undertaken before recommendations on shelf classification of Judaica collections can be made.

American library schools have not emphasized theory of classification, on the assumption that their graduates would merely be copying centrally supplied class marks. Therefore, few Judaica librarians are equipped either to modify a standard scheme or to design a special one.

Many Judaica libraries find the same components of the LC Classification objectionable, yet there is little coordination on modifications. Sharing information on local practices is a first step toward this type of coordination, and through AJL Cataloging Workshops and the publication of their minutes, this exchange of information has begun. For example, a column in *Judaica Librarianship* revealed three similar local modifications of the LC classification of Jewish law (Berger & Wachs, 1984).

Judaica librarians in synagogues and day schools have shown a stronger commitment to special Judaica classification schemes (Weinberg, 1983) than their counterparts in academic libraries. Although the locally developed schemes may have some amateurish features, these librarians are to be commended for their commitment to providing subject access appropriate to their user communities.

Classification is not the only means of topical access to Judaica collections; we also have subject headings, and some argue that shelf classification is only for "marking and parking," i.e., a location symbol (Kaganoff, 1970, p. 130), while topical access is provided through the subject catalog.

In a recent issue of *Library Journal*, Mary Dykstra, an expert on indexing, observed that with LC Subject Headings (LCSH), "the more things change, the worse they get" (Dykstra, 1988, p. 42). She was referring to the change in format of LCSH on microfiche, but we may consider whether changes in Judaica subject headings merit such a comment.

There have been welcome changes in terminology — generally many years after they were warranted. There have also been increases in specificity and precoordination, notably in Holocaust subdivisions. The changes in geographic subdivision and pattern headings have, however, wreaked havoc in Judaica catalogs. As an example of the former, we have direct subdivision (e.g., "Jews in Boston") modified to indirect (e.g., "Jews — Massachusetts — Boston"). LC's new pattern for liturgical headings has led to numerous redundant headings in the Judaica subject catalog, just as we got rid of the odious descriptive heading "Jews. Liturgy and Ritual." Recalling the festival we have just celebrated, for every Haggadah cataloged, LC requires us to provide

three unnecessary subject headings: "Judaism — Liturgy — Texts; Seder — Liturgy — Texts"; and "Haggadot — Texts" (Weinberg, 1984).

As is true for classification, there are numerous local alterations of LCSH in Judaica libraries. A methodology for analyzing these has been proposed to the Cataloging Committee of AJL (Weinberg, 1985), but the project has not been undertaken. This is unfortunate, since coordinated action on cataloging policy always gets more attention at LC than do individual proposals.

If Judaica library administrators would authorize their catalogers to devote time to such national projects, their own libraries would benefit, as modifications to LCSH would not all have to be made locally. Furthermore, changes implemented in many libraries — for which a convincing case could be made — might ultimately be adopted by the Library of Congress.

For those contemplating online cataloging on RLIN, this has economic implications as well, since nonstandard bibliographic records, i.e., those without official LC subject headings, incur a charge.

What about the view, "If it's good enough for LC, it's good enough for me"? Let me give an example of a subject frequently requested at YIVO that cannot be retrieved either through LCC or LCSH: Yiddish Literature in English Translation. The classification scheme arranges all individual works of Yiddish literature in a single alphabet by author at PJ 5129, with no breakdown by time period, form of literature, or language of translation. Official LC practice is to provide no genre headings for individual works of fiction, only for anthologies. So what are we to say to our patrons: "Sorry, the Library of Congress doesn't recognize such a class"?

In addition to the overall characterization of a work, we need to consider analytical subject access, or specific topical access to chapters in books. Often Judaica libraries buy a work because it contains a significant amount of Judaica material; but if the centrally supplied bibliographic record does not point that out and is merely copied, the acquisition of the book may be a waste.

For fear of encroaching on the territory of those addressing research services, I shall not deal with periodical indexing. Suffice it to say that subject access to Judaica collections via card catalogs is superficial at best, while the major secondary services indexing collections and serials are not issued on a timely basis, nor are they cumulated (*Index to Jewish Periodicals*, *Index of Articles on Jewish Studies*). (*Index*

to Hebrew Periodicals, which is computerized and cumulated, covers only a fraction of the literature required by the American Judaica researcher.)

In sum, I believe we've done a better job building Judaica collections than providing access to them. The reasons for this include: lack of education in cataloging and classification theory; lack of manpower; and lack of financial resources to allow for local evaluation of national cataloging copy and for the enhancement of subject access.

Shared Cataloging

In the 1960s and 1970s the card catalogs of three of the major Judaica research libraries — the New York Public Library (1960), Hebrew Union College (1964), and Harvard (1968) — were published. These served as reference works for catalogers — primarily for determining main entry and the Romanized form of Hebraic authors' names — until AACR2 went into effect in the early 1980s and other libraries' card catalogs were no longer authorities for the establishment of headings.

The Library of Congress has served as the main source of cataloging copy for Judaica libraries through its published book catalogs and subscription service to printed Hebraica cards. During the PL-480 program, through which thousands of Israeli publications were acquired *gratis* by American libraries (Berlin, 1969), LC's monthly *Accessions List: Israel* provided descriptive cataloging data for these works.

Much of the PL-480 material was not fully cataloged by LC for many years, however, and a continuing dilemma for Judaica catalogers is whether to wait for LC copy or to do original cataloging. Given the repeatedly demonstrated lack of consistency in cataloging and indexing by humans (Leonard, 1977), there is a strong likelihood that a work cataloged originally in a Judaica library will not match an LC catalog record for the same work in terms of any or all of the following elements: choice of main entry, Romanization of the access points, subject headings, and classification. A class number assigned locally may be identical with one assigned by LC to another work at a later time, potentially creating a conflict in the shelflist.

There is a lack of self-confidence on the part of many Judaica catalogers doing original cataloging. At AJL Cataloging Workshops, the question often arises, "What heading would LC establish for this work?" There is fear of nonconformance, and those considered knowledgeable in LC cataloging practice are called on to predict what the de facto national library will do. Many

Judaica librarians have lost sight of the basic purpose of cataloging — user access to materials — and don't rely sufficiently on a commonsense approach.

Sharing of original Hebraica cataloging among Judaica research libraries has taken place in the last few years under the auspices of the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies (Berger & Wachs, 1983). Many CARLJS members deposit copies of their original cataloging records in the Union Catalogs of Hebraica and Yiddica maintained at the Hebraic Section of the Library of Congress. These are unpublished, however; in addition, since 1983, the published *National Union Catalog* includes only fully Romanized records. It was therefore suggested that the cards that Judaica libraries were sending to the Hebraic Section be sent first to CARLJS for duplication and later deposited in the Library of Congress.

Initially, original catalog cards from each library were photocopied onto long sheets that were awkward to consult. It was later suggested that the catalog records be copied onto card stock. Prefiling by Hebraic title facilitates integration of these records with local depository files of LC printed Hebraica cards.

This exchange of original cataloging involves a large amount of clerical processing, both at CARLJS and at the receiving library. Furthermore, local deviations from LC practice are not tagged, and hence the catalog copy cannot be used without review of the major components: descriptive headings, subject headings, and class number. For the insecure Judaica cataloger, however, any cataloging copy is better than no copy; in fact, for some, a book does not exist until a published bibliographic record is located for it.

A more sophisticated shared cataloging project has been initiated by synagogue librarians in California (Frischer, 1988). Recognizing that much original classification and subject analysis was going on in small, understaffed Judaica libraries, they applied for and received a grant for a central cataloging service, which provides classification numbers from two heavily used schemes in synagogue libraries (Elazar and Weine) and subject headings from an AJL list. The project is computerized, using dBasell Plus. Catalogs are mailed periodically to subscribers, and customized subject bibliographies are even available. Although database management software is not suitable for MARC records, Judaica research librarians must commend their counterparts in synagogue libraries for this shared cataloging project. (It should be noted that the computer system used for

this project does not have a Hebrew capability, and that Judaica libraries that are members of OCLC share machine-readable cataloging data for Roman-alphabet materials, although local modifications are not displayed online if a MARC record exists.)

Automation

The availability of a Hebrew character set in a major bibliographic utility is the most exciting recent development in our field (Aliprand, 1987). Can Judaica librarians take credit for the Hebraic capability in RLIN? Because of the promised Hebraic capability in OCLC, many Judaica libraries joined that network and were informed of delay after delay in implementation until OCLC reneged completely. (LC had also announced machine-readable non-Roman scripts for the late 1970s [Welsh, 1975, p. 24], which never materialized.) RLIN inherited the residue of OCLC's NEH grant, but Chinese, Japanese, and Korean — scripts infinitely harder to computerize than Hebrew — were implemented first; then came Cyrillic, which has no users. Potential Hebrew users saw RLIN implementation dates slip as upgrading its interlibrary loan system took a higher priority for RLG members. Hebrew finally became operational in late January 1988.

In light of this brief history, I do not think Judaica librarians can take credit for this accomplishment. We do not constitute a powerful pressure group in the world of library automation. We are also not very rich, and cannot afford an independent network. The ALEPH system (Levi, 1984) had been proposed for the latter, but there were no takers. The fact that other, more numerous groups made a case for computerization of their scripts allowed Hebrew to ride on their coattails.

I was not privy to all the discussions and politics of the development of Hebrew script capability in bibliographic utilities; however, now that it is here, Judaica libraries plan to move from copy cataloging to deriving cataloging online. In particular, Hebraica catalogers are planning to derive Romanized data from the Harvard database of over 100,000 Hebrew and Yiddish records that will be loaded into RLIN (Katchen, 1988).

I was particularly amused to read in the issue of *RLG News* devoted to the Hebrew capability that even the Library of Congress is looking forward to deriving Hebraica records online! (RLG, 1988, p. 4) We are all eager to copy from each other, but who will do original cataloging? Which libraries will plan systematic retrospective conversion of

Hebraica (Weinberg, 1988) rather than waiting to be notified when a full record is input by someone else?

The current concern of the majority of specialized Judaica research libraries planning to join RLG is getting Hebraica cards printed by the network or through local software. I recently designed and analyzed a survey for CARLJS (1988) on the format requirements of computer-produced Hebraica cards, but I feel that the insistence on cards by so many Judaica library administrators shows a lack of vision. Using a sophisticated bibliographic utility such as RLIN and then printing out catalog cards to file under the traditional access points shortchanges our users, who could have much more powerful access through the online system.

Incorporating RLIN's Hebrew character set into integrated library systems is a more worthy project, relevant mainly to Judaica departments of general research libraries that can afford such systems. Most small, independent Judaica research libraries do not have numerous circulation transactions and hence do not need to automate that function. They would, however, like local access to their machine-readable bibliographic records, i.e., an online catalog capability. RLG's plan to develop software that will allow libraries to search only their own records while connected to RLIN is most welcome. This feature may obviate the need for cards as well as the acquisition of expensive integrated library systems by smaller Judaica research libraries.

Although Hebrew on RLIN is operational, much work remains to be done both at RLG and by Judaica research libraries. RLIN has implemented neither an overprinting or backspace capability for Hebrew diacritics nor the sophisticated indexing program it designed to permit searching on a Hebrew base word, automatically stripping the numerous particles that can be attached to it. Judaica libraries face the tasks of building a Hebraica database, dealing with the cataloging issues that are sure to arise, and perhaps moving into the creation of special databases, such as indexes to periodicals, on RLIN.

It is unfortunate that Hebrew characters can be accommodated in machine-readable bibliographic records before they can be input into MARC authority records. Although RLG was to have developed the proposal for the latter, the ball is now in LC's court. I hope that Judaica librarians will monitor developments in non-Roman authorities rather than reacting to them after the fact, as they did with cataloging rules.

In the interim, parallel Hebrew access points will be input by many libraries to serve as indirect cross-references to Romanized headings. There is no consensus on whether these should be uniform headings or simply copied from the work in hand. The former practice (which I favor) entails the maintenance of non-Roman authority files in card form. It is envisioned that when non-Roman authorities are available in machine-readable form, parallel Hebrew access points will be unnecessary in bibliographic records, since the authority record will refer from the Hebrew data to the official Romanized heading.

In analyzing Hebrew access points structurally, it is amusing to recall an observation made by Charles Berlin in 1975: "Certain local anomalies still exist at some institutions, among them preference for Hebrew headings in catalogues, in defiance of standard transliterated headings, perhaps a relic of the old Haskalah spirit . . ." (Berlin, 1975, p. 24).

Regardless of philosophical or religious persuasion, we are in for a lot more change in Judaica/Hebraica cataloging practice during the era of automation. Technical services will be much more rigorous, and slight deviations from standards will be serious in the online environment. Judaica librarians will be forced to conform with national cataloging standards to a greater extent than they ever have. It is therefore incumbent upon us to be part of the standards-development process to ensure that the rules promulgated yield bibliographic records that conform to the search patterns of our Judaica library users.

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