

issue covers 1971; the 1982 issue includes 1970 entries; and so on retroactively until coverage will have been completed. Various subscribers had inquired about material in foreign languages published before 1972. To satisfy this request, each Autumn issue, beginning with the one for the years 1979-80, includes material for the period 1948-49 (the establishment of the State of Israel) onward.

Visitors to the Institute wonder at the amount of time and effort sometimes spent in locating a specific item or piece of information. When we describe our *modus operandi*, we are frequently asked why we don't computerize our files. We are working on that, but right now, mainly for financial reasons, we must be content with a manual operation.

We would welcome any comment from readers of this journal; it is only by knowing what bibliographers in the field want to see in this bibliography that we can improve it and make it more useful.

#### Acknowledgment

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## Compiling the Book-length Bibliography: Concepts and Strategies\*

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Although their working environments vary, librarians in the typical seminary, university, or synagogue setting are all in constant dialogue with the users of their collections. In the process of providing reference service to students and researchers, librarians often discover that the existing bibliographic coverage is woefully inadequate for locating frequently sought information in many specialized areas. Recognizing that important topics in the field of Jewish studies lack bibliographical guides, librarians can make a lasting contribution to their profession through the compilation of book-length bibliographies.

In contrast to *analytical* or *critical* bibliography, wherein the objective is the description and identification of printed texts as physical entities (e.g., typography and design, textual variants, and watermarks), our concern here is *enumerative* or *systematic* bibliography, the purpose of which is the preparation of a "list or sequence of descriptions of graphic materials on a given subject or area" (Bates, 1976, p. 9). An aspiring bibliographer should possess the ability to conceive, plan, and organize a project, as well as the tenacity to carry the project through to a successful conclusion—often after the passage of several years. Even more important are those most basic of requirements—accuracy and attention to detail. The bibliographer's potential for success will be enhanced by such traits as curiosity, objectivity, skepticism, intuitiveness, and the sleuthing skills of the detective. A working knowledge of foreign languages and library practices will reap many dividends, as will a thorough comprehension of the issues and scholarly literature of the subject matter being brought under bibliographic control (adapted from Harmon, 1981, pp. 26-27).

Having perceived the lack of an adequate bibliography, e.g., in the case of Karaites and Karaite literature, the bibliographer must then ascertain that the prospective work will meet a significant need while not duplicating any existing bibliographic tools. Once these considerations related to the

new work's *purpose* are resolved, the compiler will then decide on the book's *scope*; i.e., languages covered, chronological and geographic parameters, or possible format exclusions, such as juvenile and holograph materials. A bibliographer may, in addition, choose to limit the *domain* of the project to the holdings of one library or only the libraries in the United States. Given the paucity of adequate book-length bibliographies, the new book should be as complete as possible within its stated limitations. While bibliographies need not be annotated, it is nonetheless true that the most useful (and most favorably reviewed) ones are annotated. It is recommended that when describing primary source materials, the bibliographer should provide an indication of the holding repository for each item. If the bibliographer continually keeps the needs of the book's users uppermost in his/her mind during the early planning stages, many of the basic questions related to the scope and organization of the material will be resolved with little difficulty. All bibliographers should become familiar with the concise "Guidelines for the Preparation of a Bibliography," prepared by the American Library Association's Reference and Adult Services Division, Bibliography Committee ("Guidelines," 1982).

Locating all of the pertinent material for the bibliography is a challenge for even the most experienced compiler. Needless to say, there is no substitute for on-site visits to libraries with relevant collections, if the bibliographer is to examine each and every item. In order to maximize the return on time invested in traveling to libraries, begin with those that have open-stack collections and self-service photocopying.

The search strategy should include a close examination of all the appropriate author and subject cards (analytics are especially useful). The shelflist is an often forgotten

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