Collection Level Cataloging

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Description: While catalogers aim to provide as full a record of each item they catalog, circumstances at times call for cataloging materials as a collection. Thus, following consultation with the appropriate collection development librarian, a large number of items are grouped together and cataloged in one record, but nevertheless there should be some unifying framework for all those items, and appropriate access points should be provided.

The presentation will discuss the following issues:

- Materials chosen for collection level cataloging
- Reasons for this choice
- Options for collection level cataloging
- Relevance for Judaica libraries

Rachel Simon has been the Hebraica cataloger at Princeton University Library since 1990. She received her M.L.S. from the University of Washington, Seattle, and both M.A. and Ph.D. (in the History of Muslim Countries) from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She has served as editor of *Mideast File* (1982-1986), co-editor of *National Union Catalog of Middle East Microfilms* (1990), network editor on Judaism in the modern Middle East and North Africa for the *Religious Studies Review* (1990-), book review editor of *MELA notes* (1995-). She chaired the AJL R&S Cataloging Committee (1995-1999). Among her numerous publications are *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (1992) and *Libya Between Ottomanism and Nationalism (1987)*.

Catalogers are infamous for the pedantic attention they pay to numerous minute details, which often remain incomprehensible to "lay" users: why pay so much attention to punctuation and the presentation of the description of an item? Don't subjects and their construction look odd at times? Not to mention the forms chosen for some authorized personal and corporate names. Since cataloging of individual titles owned by the library is often the majority of cataloging performed, how come responsible catalogers in renown and respected institutions also perform "collection level cataloging" in which a number of items (at times reaching thousands) are grouped together, providing a general description, subject analysis and a call number for the collection as a whole? Moreover, how come rare books and manuscripts departments, known for the extra care they provide to extremely detail oriented and "personalized" cataloging, are the ones who often choose this option?

CLC was originally developed to process complex collections of archival materials. Only at a later stage was CLC adjusted to include all kinds of library materials, though it is most often used to process monographic collections. This expansion of CLC resulted from changing conditions in libraries. The tendency to provide full level cataloging—later accepting also the modified "Core level cataloging" focusing on essential "core" elements—for all library materials, resulted in certain institutions in large arrearage, especially in groups of materials for which there was not enough in-house expertise with a particular language or subject or due to format. Gradually, the approach of "all or nothing" was replaced with "something is better than nothing". But even then, CLC is the exception in monographic cataloging.

CLC is not used in order to choose the easy way out and avoid precise cataloging of materials one doesn't want to bother with just due to subject matter or difficulty of performance. Moreover, the decision to undertake CLC is not made exclusively by catalogers. Catalogers perform CLC following consultation and with the agreement of the individuals responsible for collection development in their institutions, and at times following the initiative of the latter.

CLC is chosen when it is believed that a group of individual items will be better represented as a collection rather than as separate items. Materials chosen for CLC can be of the following:

- Materials outside the main collection interests of the institution
- Materials in lesser known languages
- Small format publications on a specific topic
- Small format publications by a specific individual author or corporate body
- Manuscript collections that should remain together (e.g., donor's request, correspondence of an individual or corporate body)

Thus, not surprisingly, maybe the majority of CLC is performed by RB&M departments, which are otherwise known for their attention to detail in description and subject analysis.

Grouping can be based on various criteria; for example:

Subject
Women in Brazil
Originating organization
European Commission of Human Rights (Reports & cases)
Originating country
Egyptian pamphlets
American political materials
Author/subject
Studies on the Napoleonic era by Fernand Emile Beaucour
Format
Arabic textbooks used in the Gaza Strip
Arabic readers
Literary form
Modern Arabic poetry / [country]
Modern Russian poetry, female authors / years
Pre-1979 Persian periodicals and newspapers
Special collections at RBSC
Collection of exhibition brochures published by exhibitors
Collection of book and manuscripts catalogs published collectors, owners, publishers

CLC usually includes the following elements:

- Collective title provided by the cataloger
- Publication date or range of dates
- Accurate or approximate number of items in the collection
- Detailed contents note when feasible or a general description of the contents
- Subject analysis for the collection as a whole
- Added entries for the main authors and corporate bodies
- Call number for the collection as a whole

Structure

Leader: Encoding level: 7 ; Bibliographic level: c
008:       Country *{"vp" may be used for "various places"}*
245 00   [Made-up title]. *{might add sequential number or years}*
260   *{Only date is provided following $c. Preference is given to single or inclusive dates}*
300   *{Number of items (or approximate number). Size is optional and is often inclusive}*
500   *{When a list of items is included instead of a full listing in the record, indicate: "Accompanied by a guide/list"}*
505 0   *{A formal contents note should be given, within reason. If the collection is too large, a partial list might be provided}*
6xx   *{Subjects should refer to the collection as a whole}*
7xx   *{For editors, collectors, and organizations. Author-Title entries can replace contents note}*

Call number is assigned to the collection as a whole.
Add a loose title page / table of contents, including the call number, to a bound or a boxed collection.

How relevant is CLC for Judaica libraries? It depends on local policies and priorities. Thus, *hagadot*, *sidurim*, commentaries on the Pentateuch or specific tractates of the Talmud can be candidates for CLC, but most institutions who are interested in collecting these kinds of publications would rather choose to catalog each item separately. Another option is collections donated with the provision to keep the collection intact, although, here too, one can designate a separate part of the library for this collection and catalog the items separately, possibly with the addition of a note specifically mentioning the donor. CLC is also an option for specific manuscript collections, such as correspondence of individuals or a corporate body related to the institution or donated to it. CLC can also be used in lesser known languages.

Documentation

Princeton documentation: http://infoshare1.princeton.edu/katmandu/desc/colevtoc.html
LC rules: *Catalog service bulletin* no. 53 (Summer 1991): 10-14
Cornell: http://www.library.cornell.edu/cts/1colecat.htm