
Cataloging Slavic manuscripts in microform

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Phase 2 of a Title II-C Project at the Hilandar Research Library.

The Hilandar Research Library at the Ohio State University is the repository for the largest collection of medieval Slavic manuscripts on microform in the Western Hemisphere. This collection represents close to twenty years of preservation microfilming in more than thirty different Orthodox monasteries, national libraries and private collections, and serves an international community of scholars and researchers in a variety of disciplines. Growing from an original core group of manuscripts filmed in Hilandar Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece, to include materials from many other collections, the more than two thousand manuscripts reproduced to date document the cultural heritage of the Orthodox Slavs for the past one thousand years. Yet until now, descriptive information about these codices and documents was scattered and access to individual items cumbersome.

In 1988, OSU received funding under Title II-C (Strengthening Research Library Resources Program) of the Higher Education Act to preserve the microforms and to catalog the individual items, with Jill B. Fatzer as principal investigator. The microforms were cleaned and copied to archival standards last year in the first phase of the project, and catalog records describing the collections were created for OCLC and NUCMC (the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections). Catalog-

ing of the individual items will be completed this fall. The records we are now inputting into OCLC are being copied to a discrete archival tape, which will provide the means for sharing these records with research centers and with other bibliographic networks (including RLIN), and will allow the creation of derivative bibliographic publications.

Since the item cataloging relies heavily on available published and unpublished finding aids, and since the items fit into broad genres sharing similar patterns of entries, uniform titles, subject headings, etc., we have been able to make use of paraprofessional library staff with a relevant linguistic and cultural background. Before the two fulltime staff members were hired, I spent a year elucidating these patterns and writing specifically tailored procedural instructions for description, for MARC tagging in the Archives and Manuscripts Control format, and for OCLC inputting. The actual work of cataloging now proceeds through the daily consultation and collaboration of these two assistants with Predrag Matejic, curator of the Hilandar Research Library, and myself.

Many cataloging questions were addressed in the planning stages, and new challenges continue to arise as the work progresses. The finding aids we are using vary considerably in organization, detail, quality, currency and language (mostly Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, English or French). For the most

part, few directly relevant precedents or examples according to current cataloging standards and practices were found to serve as illustrations. The existing rules and patterns available, e.g., for liturgical uniform titles, for "category of religious work" subject headings, for corporate headings for heads of state, don't always stretch easily to non-Western, medieval and Orthodox Eastern materials. Fitting the Library of Congress subject headings to Orthodox Church materials, and to manuscripts in general, proved particularly awkward. No thesaurus is now valid for the genre access terms we would ideally like to provide. We faced gray areas in the cataloging of collections in microform, in the inconsistencies between MARC formats, etc. We also needed to establish several hundred names in AACR2 forms, ranging from well-documented saints and church fathers to entirely obscure scribes, virtually all in the absence of citable title pages in the works in hand. Many of the technical cataloging issues raised during this project will be discussed in more detail in the literature at a later time.

The work began last fall with the more than nine hundred items in the Hilandar Monastery Slavic manuscript Collection, the original core group of microforms in the Hilandar Research Library. We began with this collection because it covers almost the full range of liturgical genres to be found in the later collections. The majority of the works are liturgical or theological, but the wider role of Hilandar Monastery as a cultural center for the Serbs is also reflected by the presence of miscellaneous chronicles, grammars, geographies, and handbooks on medicine, music, painting, etc.

It was possible to achieve considerable economy of scale in this large collection by working on like items at the same time. Thus, we worked on descriptions of all the tetraevangelia together, then later all the menaia, the psalters, the srblijaks, the hesychast anthologies, the patristic miscellanies, etc. As each new genre was encountered, we created an example record representing the common pattern for main entry, uniform title, subject headings, etc., and collected these illustrative examples in a notebook.

Further efficiency was accomplished at the time of inputting by taking advantage of the similarities in groups of like items. We were able to set up a "template" for each group by programming the function keys of the OCLC M300 to use the pattern records as the basis for a "new" record and to delete data which is not constant from one record to the next. This very considerably reduced the amount to be keyed in, since several fields in each record contain constant data, such as the name of the parent collection and the description of the microform. We have also used the OCLC Micro-Enhancer in similar fashion to create skeletal templates which could be copied several times and then filled in.

As predicted, the patterns established for the first collection have been very much applicable to

most of the subsequent collections from other Mt. Athos monasteries (including Great Lavra, Zograph, St. Panteleimon, Iveron) and elsewhere. Even where the specific patterns of entries and notes differ from the liturgical patterns, as in the two groups of imperial edicts and documents (chiefly confirming grants of land and revenues to Hilandar Monastery), the practice of standardizing a pattern example and handling a volume of similar materials together has remained practicable.

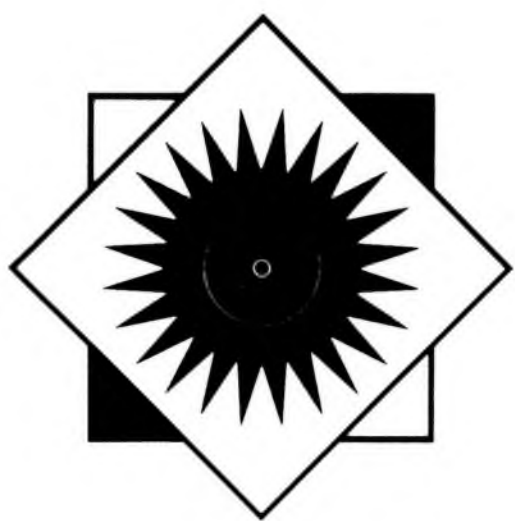
The level of detail of descriptive information in the finding aids varies, but in many cases is quite extensive. Typically, the catalog record indicates: author, uniform title, title, date of original, extent of original, parent collection, description of the microform, location of original, summary (indicating nature, contents, ornamentation, etc.), scribe, language and recension, provenance, published editions, physical condition, variant numbering, subjects, added entries (including repository designation and linking entry to the parent collection). The call numbers, according to manuscripts practice, reflect the organization and designation of the items in their home repository rather than assignment to LC classes.

In some instances, the volume of available data is indeed overwhelming. Many of the items are anthologies or composites containing multiple works. Where possible, we have tried to give a thorough description of the contents. In most cases, the added research needed to identify and index all individual component works with full analytic author-title access points was far beyond our scope, but we have made name added entries for at least the most significant identifiable authors, sometimes as many as two dozen or more in a record. A particular effort has been made to highlight authors and subjects of special significance to Slavic studies, such as noting the inclusion of Slavic saints in a menaion. For some collections, very extensive further descriptive information is available on foliation, paper quality, musical notation, watermark designs, etc. Here again, we have tried to set reasonable limits, e.g., indicating the presence of a watermark without a full description, or giving only brief notes about provenance or binding or variant systems of numbering. Fuller information can often be found in the finding aids, which are cited in the collection records.

The guiding aim, of course, is always usefulness to researchers. Locally, this cataloging enhances control of the pieces and access to individual items. The scholars currently working with these microforms have indicated considerable interest in our records and several have requested information and examples to show their colleagues in libraries and research centers here and abroad. These researchers have also been able to supply us with new information in turn, and in a few instances these catalog records contain scribal attributions so recent they have not yet been published. In a wider

perspective, by sharing these catalog records in the national databases, we hope to integrate these items with the larger universe of related materials elsewhere, both manuscript and print, and hope

that other libraries holding such manuscripts will join us in bringing these important but relatively under-researched primary materials to the attention of scholars in many fields. ■■



INNOVATIONS

MAC MICRO: Solving the problems of microcomputer applications in an academic library

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Microcomputers have become a fact of everyone's life. In academic library work areas they have sprouted like weeds, to the great chagrin of the computer-phobic. Virtually no one has time to sit down and work through manuals. New versions of software come out with dizzying speed. How are harried librarians and staff to cope? One approach to the problem is being tried at Washington State University, where the Microcomputer Applications Committee (MAC) came into existence 18 months ago.

At the time of MAC's creation, every unit in the library was going its own way with regard to microcomputers. Hardware and software were purchased out of departmental budgets, in response to individual needs and often for specialized applications, producing an astonishing variety of configurations. Different units in the library often didn't know what was going on down the hall. Inevitably, there was much duplication of effort, particularly in training, and no uniformity in software. At least three different word processing packages were in use on three different floors, making shared data files an impossibility.

The creation of systems librarian Jim Kopp, MAC is designed to bring order out of this chaos. Major goals are to promote communication among

the different units with regard to microcomputers and to develop a core of expertise within the libraries. With this in mind, the composition of MAC consists of one representative from each of six units or divisions within the Library: Administration; Humanities/Social Sciences/Education; Technical Services; Science/Veterinary Medicine/Agricultural Sciences; Instructional Media Services; and Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections. Membership is not limited to professional staff, but is open to anyone in the unit. One highly desirable qualification is microcomputer expertise, or, if that is not available, interest and a willingness to learn. In fact, when MAC convened for the first time, a wide range of skill was represented, reflecting in many respects the varying levels of microcomputer use among the library units. Given this variety, the sharing of information has become one of the primary functions of the meetings, with the frequent discovery that what is a problem in one unit has already been solved in another.

The first order of business for the Committee was to put together a library policy on microcomputers. This policy was intended to set out the rules governing such issues as software copyright and licensing, and ownership of databases created by library staff using library-owned hardware and software. The desirability of software standardization and training for all staff using microcomputers is another area covered. Much of the content of this policy formalizes practices already adopted. How-

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