Section Three: News and Views of the Members of the ATLA Technical Services Section

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Websites of Foreign-Language Catalogers

I present here a few websites that I have found helpful (if not indispensable) when doing non-English cataloging.

For detailed work, one cannot replace a print dictionary. Nevertheless, quick access to an online dictionary often gives enough information for one's need. One site that provides an excellent collection of dictionaries is the "Foreign Language Online Dictionaries and Free Translation Links" on the YourDictionary.com website:

http://www.yourdictionary.com/languages.html

The site lists dictionaries for about 300 languages (although some may not be encountered in cataloging; Quenya, anyone?). The dictionaries themselves are on various sites, so the ease of use (and undoubtedly the quality) varies. However, I have found them generally very useful and accurate.

Another dictionary site is the English-language page of Lexilogos:

http://www.lexilogos.com/english/index.htm

The overlap in languages between YourDictioanry.com and here is considerable, but the site sometimes has resources that YourDictionary.com does not have. For example, YourDictionary.com lists Manx, but actually has no Manx dictionaries—there is only a link to "Manx grammars, news, and fonts." Lexilogos, on the other hand has several Manx-English dictionaries. (The French portion of the site [http://www.lexilogos.com/dictionnaire_langues.htm] should not be overlooked, since it has an even more-extensive list of languages, although a perusal of the list indicates that many of the extra languages are various dialects of French, German, or English.)

Sometimes, online dictionaries go beyond their print counterpart by providing grammatical analysis of words. "Words by William Whittaker" (http://www.archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/words.exe) actually parses declined and conjugated Latin words. There is no need to know a precise lexical form to find a Latin word with this site.

What one often needs, however, is the translation of a complete phrase, not of a single word. For that, the best choice is an online translator. The translator I find indispensable is ImTranslator:

http://imtranslator.net/translation/

The site notes that the "translation [is] powered by Google™, Microsoft and other translation engines." This gives you the ability to compare translations if a given language is

available in more than one engine. The translator, if it does its work well, will also take care of translating the grammatical connections between words in a phrase. These connections are shown by modifications of words often hard (or impossible) to find in dictionaries, since the dictionary only lists the lexical form of a word (with some exceptions, as noted above).

Not to be overlooked is the "Auto detect" capability of ImTranslator. Checking this box requests ImTranslator to guess the language from the text given for translation. This can be extremely helpful. I was cataloging a festschrift for a Swedish bishop, and had input the text of the contributions. Whether or not I checked "auto detect," one title would not translate. When I input the title separately, checked "auto detect," and translated, the title turned out to be Norwegian. That meant I needed to add a language note to the record.

One should keep in mind that neither general dictionaries nor general translation engines work well with technical language. This is as true of theological terms as for nuclear engineering terms. Much of the time, however, the universality of theological terminology helps one overcome this problem.

One old rule that catalogers used to have still applies: don't duplicate work that someone else has done. This maxim led to the various *National Union Catalog*s that were available in print volumes. Today, the only online resource that comes closest is OCLC. Yet there are dozens of libraries around the globe doing cataloging that doesn't appear in OCLC. An excellent collection of libraries with accessible websites is the "Libweb: Library Servers via WWW":

http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/

The subtitle notes that "Libweb currently lists over 8000 pages from libraries in 146 countries." To find a particular library, search under the area of the world, then under the country. Within the list of libraries under a specific country, look for a "national" or "royal" or "union" catalog, and search in the catalog for the item you have. Some countries have a virtual or actual online union catalog, which provides for searching across libraries. Alternatively, you can look for a major university in the specific country and search in its catalog. There will usually be an English-language interface to the catalog, in addition to an interface in the vernacular. The English-language interface can be identified by its abbreviation ("EN" or "ENG"), or with the Union Jack of Great Britain, not usually with the United States flag. But even without an English-language interface, you will probably see interfaces around the world that look familiar, since these libraries obtain their systems from the same companies as libraries in the United States.

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CC:DA

Work continues on revisions to RDA. Various national partners propose additions and revisions to RDA and all partners review and comment on those proposals. The Joint Steering Committee (JSC) next meets in Glasgow Nov. 2-4, 2011.