

The Description of Cartographic Archives Using the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition

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The *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, second edition (AACR 2),¹ presents map archivists with a set of rules for describing many of the documents in their custody. In particular, the rules prescribe a number of strategies for describing units of cartographic records more commonly found in archival repositories than in map libraries. Since these suggested strategies are either scattered throughout this substantial volume or are not sketched in sufficient detail, the archivist may fail to see how these apparently library-oriented rules can be applied in an archival setting.

Rather than trying to persuade readers that the rules can be used in describing cartographic archives simply by showing “how we do it here,” one must prepare the ground by posing and answering questions such as: What are the aims of description? Why are rules necessary? What are the desirable features of a set of rules? The first section of this discussion will attempt to enunciate principles against which one can judge the effectiveness of AACR 2 in describing cartographic archives.

The fundamental goals of description and indexing of archives are intellectual control and access to whole sets of records or parts of them. The usual instruments for accomplishing these goals are accession records, catalogues, inventories and repository guides, which form a natural progression arising from activities intended to preserve provenance and make records available to patrons. Description names records, that is, distinguishes one unit from all others, enumerates subordinate parts or series of records and makes explicit the relationships between those parts. Description also provides “document surogates” to which name and subject headings can be attached, enabling researchers to proceed from their own concepts, through an artificial vocabulary, to document descriptions. It should be noted that this process of description is not the only means the archivist will use to reveal provenance.

There are three principal reasons for promulgating formal rules for description. First, because the elements of each description must be intelligible to relatively untutored users who came to the catalogue to find information about the holding of a repository, descriptions need to be consistently portrayed. Hence, the rules must

¹ American Library Association et al., *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed. Michael Gorman and Paul W. Winkler, (Chicago: ALA, 1978).

identify the elements of description and prescribe a format for their recording. Second, once documents are described according to a generally identifiable format, descriptions must be located in one or more files. Hence, the rules must codify names, titles, and other features used to cite documents and lead the searcher to them. Third, formal rules are needed if more than one person is required to do descriptive work, a reason often overlooked by archival repositories trying to build consistent descriptive programmes. It should also be noted that automatic searching demands special rigour in description and indexing activities.

Having enunciated the purpose and justification for a code of cataloguing rules, one must ask, what are the desirable features of such a set of rules? From the archival point of view, rules should:

- (1) define the field of information to be used for description;
- (2) allow the archivist to show the complex, often hierarchical character of records;
- (3) allow the archivist to choose the level of details at which records should be described depending on the repository's needs and resources;
- (4) provide descriptions which are compatible across media where there is a need for a multimedia finding aid;
- (5) observe *respect des fonds* and *ordre primitif*. (Indeed, these two features of records should be confirmed in the accessioning process. Description can take place only after the context and order of the records have been established.)

Before examining the rules in some detail, it will be necessary to give a brief outline of the structure of AACR 2. Part I (Chapters 1-13) is concerned with the selection and recording of information about the *physical item in hand*, not the original or other form in which a document has appeared. Chapter 1 is a set of general rules for describing any kind of document or publication except where general rules are contradicted or qualified by rules in separate chapters dealing with particular media. For example, Chapter 3 deals with maps. Each chapter of Part I is organized in the same order, so section numbers have a mnemonic character. Section .1 always covers the title and statement of responsibility areas of a description. Section .5 always deals with physical description. The rules in Part I, then, define fields of information and provide description compatible across media, which satisfies the first and fourth of our desiderata. Our third desideratum is satisfied by rule 1.0D, which enumerates the elements used to produce descriptions at one of three levels of detail. An institution can adopt different levels of detail in different cataloguing situations, or the amount of detail can be prescribed when cataloguing a certain unit according to its importance and the resources currently available. In this context, it is important to distinguish "level of detail" from "level of description." The latter is a term for part of a multilevel description used to describe the hierarchical relationship among items. To begin cataloguing cartographic material, one would begin with Chapter 3. In some instances, rules in the third chapter would simply indicate that the corresponding section of Chapter 1 is to be applied with qualification. Omission of a specific instruction in either chapter implies that the cataloguer is free to take whatever action is desired as long as it is consistent with the intent of the rules.

Part II (Chapters 21-26) provides rules for the selection and construction of name and uniform title headings. One should note carefully that "the rules in Part II apply

to works and not generally to physical manifestations of those works, though the characteristics of an individual item are taken into consideration in some instances.” The notion of a *work* as the “essence of a book” has some limited application in the realm of cartographic materials, but it has little meaning for other archives which are usually described as physical objects. Archivists will have to grapple with the question of whether hand-made amendments to a published map constitute a new cartographic “work”. Certainly, a unique archival document has been produced, but one must account for both the published map and the new “work”.

The chapters in Part II address a number of problems. Chapter 21 provides rules for the selection of headings where only one heading is possible, as in a bibliography, and provides guidance in identifying a work. Archivists will have to consider whether it is useful to embody the concept of a work in their finding aids, for archival catalogues are usually used to locate previously unknown materials. Name headings are intended merely to give access to descriptions of documents without designating any single heading as pre-eminent or “main”. Hence, the notion of main entry has even less meaning for archival catalogues than for library catalogues of published items. Indeed, the committee which revised the rules did discuss alternative headings as an option to the main entry concept, but they did not have sufficient time to examine the implications thoroughly. The decision for or against main entry is left to the cataloguer.

Chapter 22 lays out detailed rules for constructing personal name headings for use in catalogues. Archivists should find these rules a great help in producing consistent entries, although the repeated instructions to consider the forms of name as they appear in a work are noteworthy examples of a continuing bias favouring the published book. Many of these provisions can be ignored or written out of a local adaptation of the rules without violating the basic structure.

Chapters 23 (Geographic Names) and 24 (Headings for Corporate Bodies) are to be used in tandem. Chapter 23 is used primarily as guidance for constructing the names of “places” used in constructing corporate headings or names of governments. The rules in Chapter 24 for headings for corporate bodies are very important because access to cartographic archives will frequently be through the names of organizations or government departments which were responsible for their creation or accumulation. Given that corporate names are often long and complex and usually reflect hierarchical organization structures, rules which aim at providing consistent, predictable headings are necessarily complicated. The rules for corporate headings in AACR 2 are, all the same, another step away from the complexities and inconsistencies of earlier codes and are, at times, disarmingly simple. Archivists should keep in mind that corporate name headings are filing devices; they are not meant to recapitulate the entire hierarchy of a large organization like a government.

Chapter 23 (Uniform Titles) will probably have only limited application for the map archivist. There may be a need to create headings for laws or treaties as outlined in sections 25.15 and 25.16. The last chapter (References) gives guidance in creating references from forms of names that researchers might reasonably think of to the form established in a catalogue.

Having sketched the general outlines of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, we can now focus on the most pertinent part of it, Chapter 3 (Cartographic

Materials). A section-by-section discussion is not needed because much of the chapter's account is applicable to both published and unpublished cartographic records and to both single items and multipart units. One should read the rules and examples in order to learn most of the descriptive techniques. The following analysis highlights and illustrates the parts especially relevant to map archives. At this point, one should take special notice of the important qualification made on page 1 of AACR 2: "These rules are designed for use in the construction of catalogues and other lists in general libraries of all sizes. They are not specifically intended for specialist and archival libraries, but it is recommended that such libraries use the rules as the basis of their cataloguing and augment their provisions as necessary." The examples and rule modifications shown below are made in the spirit of this proviso.

Section 3.0J (Description of Whole or Part) has no counterpart in Chapter 1 or any of the other chapters of Part I. Almost by itself, this section makes the rules applicable to archives, for it implicitly recognizes the need to show the complex, hierarchical structure of many cartographic records, whether published or original.

In describing a collection of maps, describe the collection as a whole *or* describe each map (giving the name of the collection as a series), according to the needs of the cataloguing agency. If the collection is catalogued as a whole, but descriptions of the individual parts are considered desirable, see chapter 13. If in doubt about whether to describe the collection as a whole or to describe each part separately, describe the collection as a whole.

Chapter 13 (Analysis) gives instructions for preparing analytical entries for monographic series, "in" analytics and multilevel description. The examples below show different ways of describing collections or series and/or items in them.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION AS A WHOLE

[Vancouver Island coal mine plans / collected by William W. Johnstone].—Scales vary.—1920-1952.—25 maps : 19 col. ; 145 x 380 cm or smaller.

DESCRIPTION OF ONE MAP—SEPARATE DESCRIPTION

Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd., No. 4 Mine, Comox : plan showing longwall district off no. 20 east level, no. 2 slope, locality of explosion, 1.55 p.m. on the 30th day of August 1922 / Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Limited, Eng. Dept. ; T.W. Scott.—Scale [1:480]. 1"=40'.—1922 Sept. 4.—1 map : photocopy ; 79 x 93 cm.—([Vancouver Island coal mine plans / collected by William W. Johnstone]).—Blueprint.—Casualties listed.

DESCRIPTION OF WHOLE COLLECTION AND PARTS—MULTILEVEL DESCRIPTION

[Vancouver Island coal mine plans / collected by William W. Johnstone].—Scales vary.—1920-1952.—25 maps : 19 col. ; 145 x 380 cm or smaller.—The Vancouver Island coal mine plans collected by William W. Johnstone are considered a single accession (9046), although they were not all received at the same time. The first four items listed below were transferred from the Manuscript Division (Add. MSS. 780) in October 1974. The rest of the collection was apparently received at a later date, but no documentation exists for it.

[Canadian Collieries, (Dunsmuir), Limited coal mine facilities, Vancouver Island : fire insurance atlas / B.L. Johnson, Walton].—[Vancouver, B.C. : B.L. Johnson, Walton Co., 1951-1952].—1 atlas (12 folded leaves of plates) ; 11 col. plans ; 30 cm.

Key plan, Canadian Collieries, (Dunsmuir), Limited.—Scale [1:142 560]. 1 inch = 2¼ miles.—[1952?].—1 map : col. ; 66 x 74 cm.—Section of Vancouver Island, approximately 30 miles in length, not shown.—Inset: Location map. Scale [1:506 880]. 1 inch = 8 miles.

Canadian Collieries, (Dunsmuir), Limited : Bright Mine, Cranberry District, Vancouver Island, B.C. — Scale [1:600]. 1 inch = 50 ft.—1952.—1 plan : col. ; 34 x 53 cm.

...etc.

Nos. 4, 5 and 7 mines : plan showing coal workings in lower seam / Canadian Collieries, (Dunsmuir), Limited.—Scale [1:3 600]. 1 in.=300 ft.—[1922].—1 map : photocopy ; 85 x 193 cm.—Blueprint.—Location of explosion of Aug. 30, 1922, off no. 20 east level, No. 4 Mine, noted in ms.

...etc.

Section 3.0J satisfies our second and fifth desiderata. Furthermore, multilevel description allows for a finding aid format which should be familiar to archivists. At the same time, item descriptions serve as bibliographic entities to which name and subject terms can be attached in a retrieval system. What is being asked of the archivist is a somewhat unaccustomed degree of rigour in describing below the level of the series or collection. As one proceeds to describe smaller and smaller units in a hierarchically arranged set of cartographic records, however, redundant information is omitted because it has already been detailed or summarized in the description of superordinate units. In some actual cases, then, the item descriptions may be much shorter than those in the examples given here.

The hierarchical structure of the set of maps in the multilevel description example above is graphically shown by the simple device of altering margins. One can conceive, however, that a computer system would account for these relationships by linking the individual descriptions together with a network of "addresses". The National Library of Canada's DOBIS system, for instance, can accommodate about 50 hierarchically related levels of bibliographic descriptions. On one computer record, for example, would be recorded the number or address of another record which is subordinate to it, and the latter would conversely contain the address of the description of the superordinate unit. Thus, if one identified a description of a single item by means of a name or subject heading, one could easily ascertain the larger context of that item. In this way, provenance and original order are not disturbed, and the descriptive system accommodates access to single items and groups of items.

Since most archival repositories hold single items, both published and unpublished, the remaining parts of Chapter 3 will have to be studied. One amendment suggests itself in rule 3.4 (Publication, Distribution, Etc., Area) to allow the cataloguer to supply a date alone (omitting the place of publication and the name of the publisher) on the pattern of the same section in Chapter 4 (Manuscripts—and, by extension, manuscript maps). Indeed, if the code as a whole were being adopted in a multimedia archival repository, an amendment to rule 1.4 along the same lines would be in order.

While the code as written satisfies our desiderata, a further amplification of the rules as they apply to cartographic archives should be explored. A special set of applications for the use of map librarians is already in preparation,² and the next logical step would be to agree on applications for map archivists. In the absence of agreement on the basic requirements for archival description in general, AACR 2 should be examined with archivists' requirements in mind. Libraries and archives should encourage common approaches to develop the rules in areas calling for special treatment.

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- 2 Anglo-American Cataloguing Committee for Cartographic Materials. *Cartographic Materials: A Manual of Interpretation for AACR 2*. In preparation.

Résumé

L'auteur considère l'usage des Anglo-American cataloguing rules pour la description des archives de cartes et montre comment on peut employer ces règlements en décrivant la structure hiérarchique et compliquée de bien des groupes de documents cartographiques.



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