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I.K.

ALEPH – THE NEW SOFTWARE IN THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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The “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library, Cluj has the privilege to be one of the few automated libraries in the country and among the first to be automated. In the first stage automation consisted of purchasing computers which were then used, for a brief period, for editing library cards in Word Perfect.

This allowed librarians to get used to computers and learn an editing program which made the use of other softwares much easier. Later on the VUBIS software was purchased. Certainly, it was a program for small libraries, but it was suitable for our needs at the beginning, or at least it was suitable for cataloguing. The database in VUBIS consisted of more than 44,700 records which were transferred to a new program called ALEPH, a software installed in August 1999. October 1999 was dedicated to the installation and learning of the new program; cataloguing commenced in the same month as the cataloguing module was the first to be installed from among the 11 modules of the system.

The present work briefly presents the new software, focussing on the cataloguing part. At the same time, we would like to say a few words about the *User's Guide to the Cataloguing Module of ALEPH*, which was edited by the Cataloguing-Classification Department of our library. The work which had as its main author Nastasia Fodorean was done in collaboration with specialists of the cataloguing department. The team dealt with the specific issues of cataloguing, defining cataloguing rules recommended by ISBD(M) on which ALEPH is based. We are not saying that this is an exhaustive list; however, all the problems that arose during the installation of the software until the publication of the work have been dealt with. We are open to any suggestion regarding cataloguing methods in ALEPH and the content of the guide, users' suggestions in general. We are going to edit a new version including modifications. I do not consider myself to be totally knowledgeable, however, practice and experience acquired during the years are countable. I liked cataloguing from my first years in the library (this was in 1972) and felt that I had a strong inclination towards this activity and thus became a passionate cataloguer. I edited a book of cataloguing exercises designed for librarianship students and professional training courses, then edited a user's manual for the cataloguing module in VUBIS which was to be published in 1999 but the software became unusable and this work has remained in the form of manuscript. In order to avoid such regrettable incidents, I completed the *User's*

Guide to the Cataloguing Module of ALEPH in a short time, thinking that it will be a useful work.

One of the most remarkable achievements of our library is automation and the greatest experiment in the history of the library was the purchase of this library software.

We must state that ALEPH is not perfect – nevertheless there is no software that would fulfill all the needs of a library. There are some deeply rooted “habits” of librarians and users and therefore we tend to expect the new software to solve our problems in the way in which we are used to it. Unfortunately, no software can take into account all these “whims” and certain provisions which render activity difficult. Therefore we must accept the software as it is and adapt it to our needs. Those who were designated to purchase the software compiled a “List of tasks in purchasing a library software”; however, a few months’ practice should have been absolutely necessary. Still, I think that the people nominated for this task are ultimately responsible for their decision of buying the software, installing it and using it. There must be those who decide and also control when decisions were applied. Although we signed a contract with the producers of the software, one of our requirements written in the “List of tasks in purchasing a library software” were not satisfied after nine months of installing the program. We refer to the database converted from the former software (VUBIS) which is incompatible with the new software. When these modifications are done, we will be able to offer databases to be used in our library or on Internet.

Cataloguing and classification (indexing) of documents is done on a professional level and according to international standards in our library. We are hoping to put the database on Internet, if the producer makes all the necessary modifications in the contract.

The *Guide* is addressed first of all to cataloguers who presently use the ALEPH and students of the Librarianship and Information Science Department of the “Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj. Similarly, it will be used by all libraries connected to the Central University Library network.

As our library has to participate in the exchange of information in magnetic format with other libraries in the country and abroad, we have chosen ALEPH because it is based on Unimarc which is internationally used and its adoption in Romania is absolutely necessary for connection to international networks of information and documentation.

We have carefully studied the Unimarc manual¹ which specifies field labels, indices and codes for fields and subfields, as well as the logical and physical format of records and their content on the magnetic band.

Unimarc deals with monographs, serials, cartographic materials, sound recordings, graphics and video materials. Unimarc structures cannot be modified, they must remain stable, moreover, they cannot be adapted to the various cataloguing practices as the only allowed practices are ISBD. This is why the guide, which has approximately 80 pages, uses the recommendations given by the actual state standards² referring to the cataloguing of publications and manuals³ edited by the Central University Library in Bucharest. The problems are dealt with according to the order of the fields specified by Unimarc, then ISBD(M) cataloguing rules are presented and finally, our own cataloguing rules. Our cataloguing agency slightly differs from the ISBD(M) norms: this is dictated by tradition, user needs and library needs. If it was not for these slight deviations, we would have problems with the traditional catalogue. However, the

¹ *UNIMARC Manual* ed.by Brian P. Holt, assisted by Sally M. McCallum and A.B. Long; translated by Mihaela Bora, Doina Banciu, Mihaela Paraschivescu, București, Biblioteca Națională a României, 1993, VI, 432 pp.

² *STAS 12629/1-88: The bibliographic description of documents. General scheme*
STAS 12629/2-88: The bibliographic description of documents. Current monographic publications

³ *METODOLOGIA de aplicare a normelor ISBD (M) (The METHODOLOGY of applying ISBD(M) norms)*, edited by Ioana Borocan and Constanța Dumitrășconiu, București, s.n., 1993, 65pp

METODOLOGIA de aplicare a normelor ISBD (M) în bibliotecile de învățământ (The METHODOLOGY of applying ISBD(M) norms in school libraries), compiled by Florica Câmpeanu in the Central University Library, Bucharest, Bucharest, s.n., 1984, 43 pp

“adaptations” are insignificant for the structure of the elements of descriptions and the succession of the ISBD(M) zones.

Every zone and subzone in ISBD has a corresponding field (for the zone) and a subfield (for subzones) in Unimarc. There is no specific order for the fields used in bibliographic descriptions or descriptive notes. Moreover, data in the ISBD zones are registered in the order of the elements of description in ISBD and this determines the order of subfields in Aleph.

Through the codes of field and subfields, Unimarc generates the punctuation for the next field. As such, in most case it is unnecessary for the cataloguer to add punctuation.

We must also mention the fact that we are still printing catalogue cards for all publications in case the information in the database deteriorates. This security measure proved to be wise when the VUBIS system could no longer be used in March 1999. Since not all the branch libraries are connected to the network (we still do not have a library integrated system) we are compelled to maintain traditional cataloguing with publications of the branch libraries. Cards signalling new publications in the central library as well as cards for the branches are printed by a relatively simple method of transferring information from the database to an editing program (Corel).

The editing of library cards and other activities linked to the organisation of the basic collections make cataloguing difficult and this leads to delays in processing new acquisitions. We hope that there will be changes in the library legislation and we will be able to avoid many bureaucratic activities that cause inconvenience at the moment.

The structure of the *Guide* is the following: the short introduction is followed by the first chapter dealing with the bibliography used and the specific fields of Unimarc. These are divided into:

Field “0” is the identifying block containing the ISBN (for current monographic publications) and the ISSN (for serial publications or collections). These are some unique, international standard numbers which easily identify publications in the database.

Field 1 is the block of codified information containing general data of processing, the year of publication and the language of the publication. The ways of compiling language codes and country codes are explained in detail.

Field "2" is the block of descriptive information which refers to the bibliographic elements of a publication. The enumeration of fields and subfields are followed by concrete examples for every rule. The following issues are dealt with: the description of collections, types of collections (by the same author without a common title, by the same author with a common title, more works by the same author with or without a common title, collections of separate works, bound together), the description of publications with several authors, the description of a cycle to which a work belongs to, description of proceedings of a symposium, conference or congress. How to deal with the original title of a translation, how to introduce names of institutions and how to process extracts from serial publications and facsimiles is also explained.

As the processing of many-volumed works is more difficult, the ways of processing them are presented, together with the definition of concepts such as "multivolume" and "master".

There are certain rules for entering in the database the name of publishing houses, titles of collections so that there is only one point of access for a publishing house or collection in the database.

The work continues with Field "3", the notefield. It is well-known that notes are generally formulated according to user needs and library needs; they must be clear and concise. There are examples of types of notes and the corresponding fields are also mentioned. Their role and use in our library is also presented.

Field "4" refers to the processing of serials, whereas the guide only deals with monograph publications.

Field "5" is for related titles and is about the creation of points of access to the titles inscribed in other parts than the title page (cover, spine). This is a useful section because readers remember a title on the cover or the spine of a book rather than a

title on the title page, whereas the title page is the main source of information for the cataloguer.

Field "7" is extremely important – it is for intellectual responsibilities where we introduce the name of individuals or collectives who have contributed to the work. Practically this is about the creation of uniform headings. This is the field which provides information about the authors of works. The introduction of these elements requires great care and skill, however, authors' names already existing in the database can be copied from the index. It is well-known that users usually look for authors and then for titles. There are few who can search according to other criteria or keys.

The second chapter of the *Guide* – suggestions for using the system – is like a users' guide. There are suggestions for entering the system; the modules of the system, the introduction of search terms and quitting the system are also presented. The search keys are also described at the presentation of the OPAC.

The final part of the guide shows the keys most often used in making cataloguing work easier.

We hope that we have succeeded in addressing the issues in a convincing manner and they will be useful for everybody who is interested in this guide.

The library has undergone many changes throughout the years which was beneficial to its development and its readers, too. There is still an important task ahead of us: connecting all the branch libraries to the central library network and then connecting our library to other databases in Romania, as soon as possible. First we should be connected to those libraries in the country which use Aleph, although there are not many of them: the Central University Library Timișoara and the Central University Library in Iași. Fortunately, the few libraries using Aleph in the country are all university libraries, therefore they probably have the same range of publications necessary for the higher education learning process. This allows for shared cataloguing which is the dream of every library. We hope that it will not keep us waiting for long.