

## Book Reviews

**Baca, Murtha, et al.** *Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and Their Images*. Chicago: American Library Association on behalf of the Visual Resources Association, 2006. 396p. \$75 (ISBN 0838935648). LC 2006-13342.

At my small library I am the only Cataloging Librarian. This means that I am responsible for cataloging materials in all formats. That having been said, though, the only realia I had ever cataloged was the shovel used to break the ground when our new building site was formally dedicated in 1973. Therefore, when I was asked to write a review of this book, I wondered how I could make the review a practical assessment and not just a theoretical evaluation. Then my supervisor presented me with a mold for a medal awarded in the field of archaeology. I jumped at the chance to use this guide to catalog the beautiful but unfamiliar object in my hand. However, I soon discovered the shortcomings, as well as the strengths, of the manual before me.

*Cataloging Cultural Objects* is a detailed and thorough manual that helps a cataloger, or noncataloger, deal with the attributes particular to cultural objects—from small pieces of realia, to buildings—from sections of a painting to digitized images of artworks. Its scope includes all art and architecture but does not include natural history or scientific collections. The book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of theoretical considerations. Topics covered include: the nature of a work versus an image; the concept of related works; and the importance of authority files and controlled vocabularies. The second part consists of a chapter on each element of the final metadata record. Each chapter includes information about the metadata element, cataloging rules, and information on the presentation of the data. For example, for the element “object naming” (what a cataloger would call the title field)

the book presents information about naming, cataloging rules, and information on how the object name should be displayed. At the end of each chapter, there are a number of extremely pertinent and useful examples. The third part deals with authority control. Four different types of authorities are covered in separate chapters. They are personal/corporate names, geographic places, concepts (materials, form/genres, etc.), and subjects.

For the task I had at hand, namely the cataloging of one piece of realia, the guide was helpful, but it was not what I had hoped it would be. This is because I do all of my cataloging following AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules, 2nd ed.) rules and in the MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) format. Although the guide follows some AACR2 rules, it does not conform strictly to them. Instead, it takes a relational approach, following many of the concepts presented in FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records). This means that if you are cataloging just one object, you need to look at each element, match it up against the corresponding area in AACR2, and then map the information to the corresponding MARC format. The guide was still helpful in bringing to my attention certain concepts and properties that are unique to cultural objects. For example, there was much information on how to measure and describe the object, as well as information on what kinds of notes were helpful to the community. The guide also provided me with lists of pertinent thesauri for each of the elements.

However, I feel that the guide is most useful for the cataloging of an entire database of cultural objects, especially in a nontraditional (in other words, non-MARC) setting. The guide is extremely well presented and has a logical approach to



the subject. It can be used as a stand-alone manual to create a database of cultural objects. Although it is not intended for system designers, it is so thorough and explains the issues of the relationships between, for example, a work and its creator, so well, that it can be used as the basis for designing a database of metadata about objects.

It is especially useful for noncatalogers, in that it covers each element of a metadata record clearly and explains not only what should be present in the record, but why. The manual is not prescriptive. It allows the individual institution to decide at which level they need to catalog an item, but it offers clear guidelines on minimal cataloging requirements. It also seeks to establish a basic uniformity, especially in the use of thesauri, so that the exchange of information across institutions is made easier. Finally, at the end of each chapter there are complete examples of cataloged cultural objects. The examples do not just include the element covered in the chapter, but instead include the entire record. This helps to put each element in context. Likewise, the corresponding authority records are also included in the examples. Again, these are very helpful in letting the cataloger understand and appreciate the concepts behind the metadata he or she is encoding.

In summary, the book is helpful for the cataloger who is faced with cataloging one object, but it is not a manual based on AACR2/MARC. So, unlike Nancy B. Olson's *Cataloging of Audiovisual Materials and Other Special Materials* (1998), it is not going to relate every rule to AACR2 or present the examples in the MARC format. However, that was not the authors' intent. The intent of the guide is actually much broader, and the authors have come up with a guide that is extremely well thought out, forward-thinking, and very clearly presented. It is an enormous asset for any institution contemplating cataloging a set of cultural objects, especially if they do not have a metadata structure in place yet.—*Isabel del Carmen Quintana, Harvard University.*

*Libraries & Culture: Historical Essays Honoring the Legacy of Donald G. Davis, Jr.* Eds. Cheryl Knott Malone, Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, and John Mark Tucker. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Center for the Book, 2006. 294p. alk. paper, \$25 (ISBN 0844411558). LC 2006-18763.

As a tribute to an admired and beloved person's career, the *festschrift* lends a warm, personal touch to the chilly world of scholarly publishing. The individual contributions are heterogeneous, to be sure, but no more so than those in most other edited collections. *Libraries & Culture: Historical Essays Honoring the Legacy of Donald G. Davis, Jr.*, is a good example of the genre. Originally published as a special issue of the journal *Libraries & Culture* (v. 40, no. 3, summer 2005), it is now being offered in book form by the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress.

Colleagues and former students offer personal reminiscences in glowing praise of Davis's activities as professor at the University of Texas at Austin, editor of *Libraries & Culture*, and leader in IFLA, the Library History Round Table, and the Conference on Faith and History. Also included are a bibliography of Davis's works and an essay by John Mark Tucker, "Fides et Historia: Christian Sources for the Professional Contributions of Donald G. Davis, Jr." In this unusual piece, Tucker attempts to interpret the intellectual and religious underpinnings of another person's life, based on Davis's own extensive writings about his Christian faith and the practice of librarianship as a life of service.

Davis's lifelong interest in library history is the focus of the remainder of the collection, beginning with articles on Library History and Education Research that assess the current state of the field. The pioneering contributions of Davis's generation of advocates for library history may be taken for granted today. But, as Edward A. Goedeken shows in his survey of literature reviews published in the *Journal of Library History/Libraries & Culture* from 1967 to 2002, the groundwork