

A first contribution in the field of religion: the ACOLIT Project

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The idea of an Authority List in catholic religious field arose in 1995 in Assisi, during the Congress of the Associazione dei bibliotecari ecclesiastici italiani (Italian Catholic Librarian Association). This idea was immediately realized by the constitution of a work group directed by Mauro Guerrini. The director found out also the title of the work: *Acolit*, an acronym of liturgical savour: *Autori cattolici e opere liturgiche in italiano* (Catholic Authors and Liturgical Works, in Italian: an Authority List). After seven years, one half of the plan has been realized.

Two volumes have already been published:

1. Bible, Catholic Church, Roman Curia, Papal State, Vatican, Popes and Antipopes / editorial staff: Mauro Guerrini, Paola Pieri, Fausto Ruggeri, Luciano Tempestini (1998). LXI, 385 p.
2. Religious Orders / editorial staff: Silvana Chistè e Giorgio Mocatti (2000). 1102 p.

The third volume, concerning liturgical works, will follow before the end of this year.

Here are the aims of *Acolit*.

First, it tries to offer a reliable Authority List in religious field; it tries to concern completely all the aspects, past and present, of history and life of the Catholic Church: two thousand years of culture and civilization, continuously evolving and leaving deep traces in culture, in literature and art.

Acolit fills a large gap in the professional literature.

The aim of *Acolit* is to help the cataloguer in the choice of the form of the name. It doesn't tackle the problem of the distinct bibliographic identity, a concept allowed by the *Paris Principles* under point 6.2, excluded from *Rica*, but considered by AACR 42B, note 5 and by AACR2 22.2B2. The scope of *Acolit* is limited to listing the standard form the names and equivalent forms of names by which an author or a title are known. Libraries will adopt the form they consider most suitable for their catalogue (e.g., the Latin or the vernacular form of a pope's name;¹ one order of citation rather than another) and – if they prefer to do so – will adopt more than one name to index groups of works written by the same author under different names (principle of plurality of headings or distinct identity). *Acolit*, for example, uses blind entries to cross-reference the civil name of the popes to their papal name, under which the variant forms of both are listed.

This Authority List has been made especially for librarians, and tries to improve their professional ability and to bring into harmony the catalogues of the libraries by means of:

- 1) the proposal of authoritative uniform headings;
- 2) cross-references between entries and their variants in order to favourite the research;
- 3) periodical lists of revision, according to the evolution of the ecclesiastical world, which in the course of the ages was closely connected with the civil one, in harmony or in contrast with it, and which has always showed a continuous and sometimes surprising sprightliness. The first lists of revision, and their means of publication, are being planned.

Acolit has been made for all libraries, not only for the religious ones, but also for all which have religious books, for the well-known vicissitudes, sometimes dramatic, of Italian religious institutions (and of their libraries) in two thousand years of history. It is intended as an instrument of standardization in cataloguing religious works.

¹ There was a time when French research libraries adopted the Latin form for the names of classic authors and the public libraries, the French form.

Acolit has also the aim to contribute, with its proposals, to the present debate about the revision of the RICA and about the construction of national *authority lists*. It is a list of controlled names, and so it can also be an introduction to a list of subject headings in the field of religion.

This is the general plan of the work (each volume concerns one or more sections of the catholic religious world):

1. the *Bible* and its partial editions;
2. the Catholic Church, comprising the names of institutions, departments and commissions of the Roman Curia (Holy See); the names of the offices for the civil administration of the Papal State, of Vatican City State and of the institutions dependent on it;
3. the names of all the Popes (from Linus to John Paul II) and of the Antipopes;
4. the names of religious communities, institutes, congregations and orders, with the exclusion of military orders, orders of knighthood and charitable associations of diocesan right;
5. the titles of liturgical works;
6. the names of authors whose activities or whose works are connected with Christianity, with particular attention to authors who lived in the medieval period (e.g., Fathers of the Church, saints, theologians, bishops);
7. the names of Italian Catholic institutions and a listing of the main international Catholic institutions: associations, agencies, groups, movements, confraternities, universities and educational institutes, seminaries, colleges, bishops' conferences (national and regional), dioceses;
8. the titles of anonymous works of religious interest (e.g., *De imitatione Christi*; *Dead Sea Scrolls*).

And here are the editorial rules of the work.

Acolit formulates catalogue entries on the basis of RICA, but also takes into account the *Norme per il catalogo degli stampati* of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the *Anglo-American cataloguing rules*, second edition rev. (AACR2R),² the *Regeln für die alphabetische Katalogisierung* (RAK), the *Reglas de catalogación*, ed. refundita y rev., and the recommendations of Ifla.

The basis of the work was the analysis, the largest was possible, in the area concerned by each volume, with the looking of the names of persons and institutions, and all their variants, which are always pointed out, included the orthographic ones, and their forms in the main European languages, in Latin when exist, and in own national language when not European.

The choice of the Italian form has been made according to the language of the catalogue, off course when this form was authoritative. In the case of several Italian forms, the one of more common use was preferred (e.g. Gesuiti, Breviario).

In case of an identical form of distinct institutions, distinction has been made by means of:

- dates of birth and death, or of election and death for persons,
- date of origin or suppression for institutions,
- city either of origin or of the seat of the mother-house for religious institutions).

Each volume of *Acolit* has an adjoined bibliography of the works consulted. The volume concerning liturgical works, because of the particular nature of such a material, will have also a glossary of technical terms.

Many authoritative scholars of the various matters, also out of library science, held their kind assistance to the work group during the redaction (for the first volume: scholars of the Bible, exegesis, history of The Church and of the Roman Curia, exponents of the Roman Congregation for

² AACR2 is also available in an Italian edition: *Regole di catalogazione angloamericane, Seconda edizione, Revisione del 1988* / redatte sotto la direzione del Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR ; a cura di Michael Gorman e Paul W. Winkler. – Edizione italiana / a cura di Rossella Dini e Luigi Crocetti. – Milano : Editrice bibliografica, c1997. – xxii, 712 p. – ISBN 88-7075-469-3.

religious orders). Their names, which are warranty of scientific exactitude, are mentioned in the introduction of each volume.

Specialists of library science, according to the major aim of this work, also gave their contribute to the control of the list.

Acolit respects and presents some new acquisitions in the lexical field, due to a continuous evolution of language as well as of the scientific research.

For the BIBLE:

Terms out of use have been substituted with the correspondent ones which have already entered into common use (epistola > lettera; Vecchio Testamento > Antico Testamento; substitution of Ecclesiaste/Ecclesiastico with Qoelet/Siracide), and this despite what RICA establish.

The string has been reduced by means of:

1) abbreviations A.T. and N.T., always used;

2) a rigorous alphabetic order of the books which are parts of the Holy Bible, and which aren' t put in the traditional and well known order (from Genesis to Apocalipsis). Abbreviations A.T. e N.T. guarantee the distinction of the two main parts of the Bible and avoid confusion in the catalogue;

3) for the Gospels, the name of the evangelist has been preferred (**Bibbia. N.T. Luca**), likewise, the Letters of the New Testament are directly indexed under the name of the addressees (**Bibbia. N.T. Galati**).

Acolit has respected the last revision in the exegetic field, and has realized a catalographic order which considers all the biblical canons of the different Christian confessions, thus contributing to a sort of "ecumenic library catalogue".

For the POPES:

According with the language normally used in the catalogue, the pontifical name in Italian was chosen.

The popes' names have been alphabetically ordered after *Catholic Church* with the sequent succession:

Catholic Church. Popes. Date (chronologically ordered). Pontifical name

This kind of order is the same of AACR2, and permits a chronological order of the official works of all the Popes, and a knowledge of the history the documents published by the supreme chief of the Catholic Church.

Acolit distinguishes also the works of each Pope which are not official, and puts them under the personal name, because they are merely literary works, without links with the pontifical authority of their author.

For the ROMAN CURIA:

The departments and offices of the Roman Curia, as central government of the Catholic Church, are indeed under Chiesa cattolica (not under Santa Sede) since they are the means by which the Catholic Church in its central seats (the Holy See) exercises its pastoral, juridical and spirituals functions. The organs by which the Papal State exercises its governmental functions, are indexed under *Stato pontificio* (**-1870) and *Vaticano* (1929-). The other organizations linked with the Holy See which have acquired a citational force of their own, are directly indexed under their name (*Archivio segreto vaticano, Filmoteca vaticana*).

For the RELIGIOUS ORDERS:

Acolit presents the more complete list of religious orders ever realized also out of library science. A such exhaustive list had never been seen neither by the Congregation for religious orders of the Holy See (which is put at the head of the present religious orders, not oh the extinguished ones, that *Acolit* has tried to list wholly) nor by the "Annuario pontificio".

There are two lists in the appendix. One gives the initials of the religious orders (e.g. S.I: for Jesuits) while the other gives the names of the cities where the female institutions have their main house. The second list is particularly useful as it helps to identify the institution more easily. The name of the institution often contains the name of the city either of origin or of the seat of the mother house.

Obviously such a list as *Acolit* can be used out of the specific field of libraries for which it has been made. It can also be, for example, a sort of guide for some aspects of catholic religious world.

Finally, let me quickly present the Agency which has taken it upon itself to do this instrument of work: the Associazione dei bibliotecari ecclesiastici italiani (ABEI).

It was founded in 1978, and nowadays it has about 300 members (persons and institutions, that is libraries of every part of Italy e of different typology). It is the Association of catholic librarians which in Europe has the major number of members.

Among its main activities, we remember the following:

Two censuses of the Italian catholic libraries, whose data are contained in two volumes (published in 1990 and 1995) an electronic union catalogue of the Italian catholic libraries on cd-rom: first edition, 2001 with 550.000 records of 40 religious libraries; second edition, 2002 with 1.000.000 records of 66 libraries.

ABEI periodically organizes courses of training for librarians, congresses and seminars (and publishes their proceedings) and publishes the "Bollettino di informazione" (1981- ; new series 1992-)

It has a website (www.abei.it), which presents all the news useful for an approach of it.