



**Every reader his work, every work its title (& author):  
the new Italian cataloguing code REICAT**

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**Abstract:**

*The new Italian cataloguing code (Regole italiane di catalogazione, REICAT), published in June 2009 to replace the RICA, is based on the developments of online catalogues and networking in the last three decades and on the experience of the national library network, SBN, including some 3700 libraries, with a catalogue of over 9 million title records (43 million locations) and 3 million name records.*

*The new code is designed to meet the needs of large cooperative catalogues, based on shared cataloguing by hundreds or even thousands of librarians.*

*The new code is centred around the work, with the goal of identifying all works represented in the catalogue and recording all relevant responsibilities (i.e., responsibilities for the work, excluding those related to particular expressions or manifestations). The identification of all works is achieved by the use of uniform titles linked with author headings (non "pasted" at the beginning of the title), if applicable, or followed by suitable additions or qualifiers. The recording of responsibilities for the work is required once for all at the work level, and not for each manifestation.*

*The new code has an original structure in three main Parts, corresponding to the broad division of cataloguing in three phases or steps: the description of publications (Part I, Bibliographic description and copy-specific information), the identification of works (Part II, Works and expressions) and the recording of responsibilities of persons and bodies (Part III, Responsibilities). Eight appendices (on Abbreviations, Capitalization, Transliteration, etc.) and a full subject index complete the volume.*

*A web version, with links between related sections and to examples (with reproductions of title-pages, disc labels, etc.) is being prepared; a pilot version, now including around 9,000 images, is currently in use for workshops and training activities.*

*A full table of contents in English is available on the website of the Committee and a translation of some chapters is underway.*

A reader may know the *work* he requires; he cannot be expected to know all the peculiarities of different *editions*; and this information he has a right to expect from the catalogues.

*Antonio Panizzi* (1849) [1]

The new Italian cataloguing code (*Regole italiane di catalogazione, REICAT*) was published in June 2009 [2, 3], to replace the *RICA (Regole italiane di catalogazione per autore)*, issued in 1979 [4] and based on the *Statement of Principles* set forth by the Paris Conference of 1961.

The new Rules are based on three decades of developments and experience, at both national and international level, and they take into account the most important changes in the context of the catalogue and available technologies. A very important factor is the development of online catalogues, becoming freely accessible worldwide over the Internet in the 90s. The keyword searching capabilities of OPACs made the retrieval of a specific known item much easier for users. However, in some cases the exact matching of keyword searching may result in failures, e.g. for spelling variants, as the new code often reminds.

But the most important factor to be considered is perhaps the development of very large catalogues. Online catalogues in their early years included only the most recent acquisitions, but they grew larger and larger (and more complex) with some decades of new publications and acquisitions, retroconversion projects and the development of library co-operation and networks.

The Italian library network, SBN (Servizio Bibliotecario Nazionale), now includes some 3700 libraries grouped into 69 "nodes" (Poli), with a catalogue of over 9 million title records (43 million locations) and 3 million name records, plus some specialized databases. Moreover, libraries outside the SBN network now usually participate in smaller networks (regional, provincial or metropolitan networks, academic library systems, etc.). Therefore, the old paradigm of the single-library catalogue, compiled or supervised by a single person and including holdings stored in a single location, is virtually disappearing.

The new code is designed to meet the needs of large cooperative catalogues, based on shared cataloguing by tens, hundreds or even thousands of librarians inputting new data and amending or enriching existing records.

Today's OPACs are not only larger, but increasingly "dense": e.g., works of some importance are represented by a large number of editions (sometimes from many centuries), issues and reprints (unaltered or not), in various formats. Audiovisual products are usually issued in various formats and carriers (e.g., movies issued on cassettes and DVDs, new digital media such as Blu-ray discs, dual discs, etc.), with enhanced features or enriched content (extended or director's cut versions, behind the scenes material, etc.), and in various commercial packages. In Italy, a very large number of special editions of books and discs are distributed at bargain prices with newspapers and magazines). Other types of library materials are usually issued in printed and online versions, and sometimes also CD-ROM editions. While in a single library this multiplication of the manifestations of the same work may not be so relevant, because a library usually acquires only one or a few editions, in large networks such as SBN virtually all manifestations will be present and recorded, in one of the participating libraries at least. Therefore, the problem of the so-called "voluminous authors", in the past mostly limited to outstanding literary authors (and some works like the *Bible*), has now greatly increased and is likely to grow more and more in the near future.

As we will see, the new code is centred around the *work* itself, with the goal of identifying *all* works represented in the catalogue (now in the order of millions) and recording all relevant responsibilities (i.e., responsibilities for the work, excluding those related to particular expressions or manifestations). This goal, hitherto, has not yet been reached or even completely thought through.

We are now used to distinguishing attributes and relationships at different levels (the levels pertaining to the Work, Expression, Manifestation and Item) as a result of the FRBR report.

However, when the SBN bibliographic database was conceived, at the beginning of the 80s, the record for "authority" titles (uniform titles for works and their variants) were designed alongside bibliographic records, and not in the (somewhat uncomfortable) category of "authority records", together with those for persons and bodies. This is in sharp contrast to the usual approach in MARC formats.

Therefore, "authority" titles in the SBN database were equipped with the full range of relationships commonly available for bibliographic records (something like the UNIMARC 7--Intellectual Responsibility Block), for the recording of primary, coordinate (sometimes called "alternative") or secondary responsibility.

Up to now, in the SBN database responsibility relationships have usually been recorded *both* in the work record *and* in the bibliographic record for each manifestation. However, the recording of responsibilities could be done *once for all* at the work level; the relations would be then "inherited" at the manifestation level. This is already possible in some OPAC interfaces.

It's easy to show that this is more convenient than the usual recording of *work* relations at the *manifestation* level (i.e., in the bibliographic record). E.g., Dante Alighieri is the author of the *Divina Commedia*, as a *once for all* decision concerning the work, not to be repeated for each edition; Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares are the co-authors of *Seis problemas para don Isidro Parodi*, originally published with the joint pseudonym H. Bustos Domecq, and sometimes issued with Borges represented as the principal author. Moreover, for a movie such as Fellini's *8 1/2*, the responsibilities of the director (Federico Fellini), the co-authors of the screenplay (the well-known writer Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli and Brunello Rondi), the leading actors (Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale and Anouk Aimée) and the composer of the original soundtrack (Nino Rota), can all be recorded at the work level. With a traditional approach, instead, the cataloguer must, for every DVD edition, not only record the uniform ("authorized") title for the movie (as a work), but also around half a dozen added entries, on the basis of the names prominently appearing on the disc label or container. Obviously all these persons (or bodies) are connected with the movie *once for all*, while the case of responsibilities related to a single manifestation only (e.g. a person appearing only in extra material added in a DVD) is comparatively rare.

This approach correctly reflects responsibility relations at the *work* level, and is not to be confused with the merging of the title of the work with the heading of the single or first-named author in the same string (the so-called name/title heading). This approach is not in use in Italy, for two main reasons:

- 1) "pasting" a name and a title is neither logical nor practical, because the result is neither a title element nor a name element, but a sort of "centaur", unsuitable for effective searching, sorting and display (e.g., in author or title lists),
- 2) such an approach takes into account the "main entry" heading only, without allowing the recording of joint authors, or collaborators, directors, editors, etc. (whom, following the Paris Principles and the Italian tradition, are not to be considered authors in the strict sense).

The recording of relationships is also necessary for work identification, because it's fairly common for titles not to be intended to identify the work absolutely, but only in association with the author's name. Examples include descriptive titles of nonfiction works (*History of Rome*, *Handbook of biochemistry*, etc.), titles used in a number of fiction works (e.g., *Eva*), titles of musical compositions (*Symphony no. 1*, etc.). Treating those cases as unfortunate occurrences of homonymy is somehow awkward in theory and unpractical. The soundest and most natural approach is the recording of primary responsibility, once for all, and the automatic connection of the title with the author heading whenever appropriate (e.g., in lists of titles).

However, while the link between (not the "pasting of") the title of the work and the name of the principal author is most effective for the identification of works and for a clear and unambiguous presentation to the user, the recording of *all* responsibilities for the work at the work level has additional advantages. This "work package" could include classification numbers and subject headings (UNIMARC 6-- Subject Analysis Block) as well as other data elements used for records selection (e.g., a number of fields of the UNIMARC 1-- block).

The new code is centred on the work and includes detailed rules about modifications of the same work in different expressions, but the text does not follow the FRBR definitions and terminology closely. The main reasons of these differences have already been pointed out [5-7].

The work is defined in the code as an intellectual or artistic creation *represented* by a text (or other type of notation) or a material object, i.e. something conceived *and* composed or realized, and then made available in one or more publications (or unpublished documents to be included in the catalogue), usually with minor or major modifications.

The code provides rules for the collocation of expressions (e.g. modifications of musical works, translations, performances of musical or dramatic works), by means of additions to the uniform title. However, detailed rules for the identification of single expressions of a work were not included in the rules and will be considered for future developments.

The new code REICAT has an original structure. Its three main Parts correspond to the broad division of cataloguing in *three phases* or steps: the *description of publications*, the *identification of works* and the *recording of responsibilities* (of persons and bodies). At the same time, this three-step distinction recalls the classical definitions of the three functions of the catalogues (focusing on the specific document, on the editions of the same work and on the works of the same author), in the theoretical tradition of Cutter, Lubetzky and Domanovszky.

The Revision Committee has devoted much effort to the clarification of the general structure and the division of parts and chapters. The detailed chapter titles and captions, together with the systematic paragraph numbering system and the generous provision of cross-references between sections, were devised to enable cataloguers, after the first acquaintance, to find their way in the text easily.

At the beginning, a preliminary chapter (*0: Introduction*) introduces the definitions of catalogue functions and of primary concepts and sketches out the framework and main contents of the rules.

The first part (*Part I, Bibliographic description and copy-specific information*), follows in most details the ISBD stipulations. The strictly descriptive rules, however, are preceded by comprehensive guidelines for basic decisions about *what* to describe, and *how*: decisions which are often difficult or questionable and may lead to inconsistencies. Such problems include the distinction between serials, monographic series and multi-part publications, and the treatment of multiple manifestations (reprints, variant issues, different formats, etc.) and of title changes in

multi-part monographs and serials (Ch. 1). Detailed rules concern the transcription of data, which is now often puzzling due to graphical fancies in title-pages, covers, etc. (Ch. 2), and the choice of the main source of information to be used in description (Ch. 3), often doubtful, especially in the case of non-print materials (e.g., sound and videorecordings and digital resources).

Description rules cover all types of materials commonly held in libraries, from hand-printed books to remote electronic resources, as well as new digital carriers and formats (not to mention children's books or grey literature). Special rules, exceptions and inconsistencies were avoided as far as possible. Abbreviations were cut to a very small number (well-known and frequently used) and the symbols of the International System of Units were adopted consistently (which is not always the case in cataloguing rules). Descriptive information and notes were revised with the aim of providing clear and complete information to the user (e.g., for ceased serials, items with multiple dates, particular types of illustrations), in plain language, avoiding library jargon.

Two chapters, not previously included in the cataloguing code, are devoted to *Unpublished documents* (e.g. originals, manuscripts, unpublished reproductions, etc.), that most libraries occasionally wish to include in the general catalogue (Ch. 6), and to *Copy-specific information* (Ch. 7). The latter, currently a field of utmost interest for scholars, required comprehensive treatment clearly separated from bibliographic description (and not to be confused with the concept of "notes", belonging to the bibliographic description itself).

The most innovative part is *Part II, Works and expressions*. For the first time, this part includes detailed rules for the identification (by assignment of uniform titles and, if needed, of qualifiers, Ch. 9) of *all works* represented in catalogued publications: with or without authors, textual or non-textual, classical or contemporary, represented by only one or many expressions and/or manifestations.

As a matter of fact, we have long been accustomed to identifying *all* persons and bodies represented in the catalogue (albeit a large number of them occur only once, in a single bibliographic record) and the same approach may be applied to *all* works. This approach seemingly entails some duplication of data, but it is anticipated that a clear-cut distinction between titles as access elements (controlled) and bibliographic description (including a main title as the first element and sometimes other titles) will result in advantages in navigation, display and data management.

Chapter 10 and 11 include systematic, comprehensive guidelines on modifications to be considered as *expressions of the same work* (Ch. 10) and modifications resulting in a *new and distinct work*, based on (or connected with) a pre-existing work (Ch. 11).

*Part III, Responsibilities*, includes a brief chapter on main concepts and definitions (e.g., corporate bodies as authors, distinction between author and editor or director, etc.), two chapters on the choice of uniform headings for persons (Ch. 15) and bodies (Ch. 16), and four chapters dealing with responsibilities for the work (Ch. 17), for particular expressions or additional contents of a publication (Ch. 18), for publishing and manufacturing (Ch. 19) and for elements related to a specific copy, e.g. decoration, binding or provenance (Ch. 20).

The treatment of form of names (Ch. 15-16) before the choice of access elements (Ch. 17-20) allows the display of full examples in the latter chapters (while in RICA, as in AACR2, the preferred form of names is not shown in the rules concerning the choice of access elements).

In the rules for persons (including joint pseudonyms and fictitious names used by a number of unspecified individuals) the splitting of a single author in two or more "personalities" was rejected,

as unsound in theory and cumbersome in practice (e.g., for works reissued with different names, or with both names, not signed by the author, posthumous, collected, etc.).

The choice of the preferred form of names (and titles) is generally based on the names (or titles) occurring in original publications, as stated in the Paris Principles, with generous references from translated, adapted and popular forms. In our opinion, this choice is the safest to ensure a correct representation of cultural phenomena, in today's multicultural society, and to enable effective searching from all over the world (and with meta-search interfaces, such as the KVK).

Eight appendices (on Abbreviations, Capitalization, Transliteration, etc.) and a full subject index complete the volume.

A web version, with links between related sections and to appendices and examples (with reproductions of title-pages, disc labels, etc.) is being prepared; a pilot version, now including around 9,000 images, was presented at the February 2008 conference and is currently in use for workshops and training activities.

A full table of contents in English has been available since March 2008 on the website of the Committee and the English translation of some chapters is underway. The Committee and the editor will be glad to provide additional information and documentation about the new code and to share ideas and experience with all interested colleagues in other countries.

## References

[1] *Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the constitution and government of the British Museum, with minutes of evidence*. London: H.M.S.O., 1850, Q. 9814 (May 17, 1849).

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[4] *Regole italiane di catalogazione per autori*. Roma: Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane, 1979.

[5] The RICA Standing Commission. *The FRBR model application to Italian cataloguing practices: problems and use*. «International cataloguing and bibliographic control», 31 (2002), n. 2, p. 26-30.

[6] Isa de Pinedo – Alberto Petrucciani. *Un approccio all'applicazione del modello FRBR alle regole di catalogazione italiane : problemi e possibili soluzioni*. «Bollettino AIB», 42 (2002), n. 3, p. 267-280.

[7] Isa de Pinedo – Alberto Petrucciani. “FRBR and the revision of the Italian author cataloguing rules (RICA)”. In: *Semantic web and libraries: 26th Library Systems Seminar, Rome, 17-19 April 2002: proceedings*, Roma: Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma, 2003, p. 45-56.