Posteritati: Cataloging Individual Movie Posters from a Collection

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Interest in developing a policy on cataloging published items in manuscript collections originated with the Cataloging Department, primarily over concerns about inventory control and collection analysis. For their part, manuscript curators were concerned about the impact of the cataloging process, and in retaining control over the management of their materials. In the fall of 2014, representatives of Special Collections and Cataloging began meeting to develop a policy, and after a series of reviews the policy was approved during summer 2015.

**Policy Development**

The resulting policy clarifies when published items should be retained in a manuscript collection, calling for curators to remove items unless:

- There are substantial annotations by the creator of the manuscript collection,
- They are closely associated with adjacent manuscripts by provenance and original order, or
- It would benefit the researcher if they were retained with the manuscripts.

The policy also provides a clear delineation of the types of materials to be cataloged, limiting its application to commercially published monographs, serials, and media, although self-published materials, ephemera, and similar items can be cataloged at the manuscript curator’s discretion.

While there are still some concerns from both curators and catalogers about the policy, we have worked over the past year to develop procedures for its implementation. This has included the development of detailed procedures, coordinating with the Acquisitions Department, and creating bookplates, forms, and other supporting materials.

**Pilot 2016**

Before fully implementing the policy, we decided to run a 6 month pilot project beginning in November 2015.

- Curators identified movie posters from the Motion Pictures Publicity Collection and other manuscript collections.
- Special Collections checks out batches of 15 posters at a time to Cataloging.
- Materials are returned to the MSS collection or filed in LC order.
- Approximately 200 movie posters have been cataloged so far.

**Cataloging Challenges**

- **Multiple Formats**: We had to decide between using uniform titles or more descriptive cataloging to distinguish between posters for the same movie title.
- **Cataloging Standards**: We needed to develop RDA-based cataloging guidelines for describing movie posters.
- **Call Number Scheme**: We opted to use LC for the materials pulled out of manuscript collections and retain the MSS number for those remaining in their manuscript collection.

**Benefits**

- **Improved Access**: Posters are findable in the online catalog and ScholarSearch.

- **Inventory control**: Curators know what posters he has by searching online instead of searching through the collection.

- **Purchasing**: Curators knows what item needs to be purchased to complete the collection.