



From analogical maps to digital maps: identification of intellectual responsibilities and the application of relator codes

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The timing and institutional context in which the cartographic resources are produced, which determine the intellectual contributions and the functions performed, require differentiated decisions from the documentalist regarding the identification of the various responsibilities and the application of function codes. The use of internationally established standards for the treatment of these resources must therefore be preceded by a thorough research of its features.

A summary analysis of cartographic production in the nineteenth century was carried out, analogical and almost exclusively centered on professionals (cartographers) or specialized institutions for these activities, and compared to current production based on new technologies (digital) as a basis of support for the ideas defended. Listing the processes used and the functions performed by different participants in each of the tasks in these two periods allows to test the applicability of the standards set for inclusion of the statement of responsibility in bibliographic records and the applicability of the function codes listed in Appendix C of the UNIMARC Manual - bibliographic format.

With reference to information gathered from bibliographic descriptions of some cartographic documents, of the two time periods, with the aim of demonstrating in practice the difficulties in applying certain standards and the general and inappropriate nature of relator codes when it comes to the type of documents here treated, we present solutions for the correct identification and ranking of the various mentions of responsibility, normally present in the maps, and propose changes to the function codes recommended by the UNIMARC format. The proposal presented for the selection of the most common codes, points the codes that are considered suitable, those with a questionable application, those which do not fit and those that should be deployed or replaced by others.

In the balance phase of work, we discuss the importance and advantages for the documental systems to apply relator codes in bibliographic records, as they are considered by the format as an alternative sub-field. We compare their use in the Portuguese reference databases with their European counterpart to identify the criteria that the various documental policies adopt to decide to use them or not. A balance is also made concerning the cost-benefit for the map collection, because, contrary to the libraries, the application involves a great deal of research and technical expertise.

In the classic situation typified by numerous monographs – a publisher or author and multiple authors and an editor – opposes many cartographic resources in which various participants, with distinct functions, lead to producing the work and are partly intellectually responsible. Often the difficulty lies in knowing what are the functions performed by each one, not always discriminated, which is compounded in some cases by the lack of technicians with specific training.