

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AREA EXTENT OF ITEM (300 Field, subfield “a”)

### RDA Practice:

Extent is a core element in RDA as long as the resource is complete or one knows the total extent of the resource, see instruction 3.4 that covers all resources. However, RDA has a specific instruction for cartographic resources, found at 3.4.2 and denoted as an *Exception* at 3.4.1.3. Generally, nothing has changed from AACR2 practice, as outlined below:

### AACR2 Practice:

Under AACR2, Rule 3.5B1 says “Give the extent of a cartographic item.” Read this as, “how many maps are being described?” Count them and give both the number and the type of item using a specific material designation (SMD). For sheet maps the SMD is “**map**” so combine the number of *main maps*, as noted below, and the term “map” or “maps” to form the extent of item portion (subfield “a”) of the 300 field.

### KEY CONCEPT: MAIN MAP(S)

The concept of a “main map(s)” flows from something we call publisher’s intent, that is; based on both the content of the item in hand and in large part by the title that it is given, is there rightfully only one primary map on the sheet, placing all other maps into a secondary or even tertiary role? A combination of closely looking at the cartographic detail to see what it shows plus carefully considering the title(s) given on the item usually reveals a clear intent, including not only the subject content involved but determining which is the main map if there is more than one map on the sheet. The easiest “main map” situation to identify is when there is only one map on one side of the sheet of paper. Other possibilities include one main map that starts on one side of a single sheet and concludes on the other side of the same single sheet; two or more main maps on one side of a single sheet; two or more main maps on both sides of a single sheet; one main map on multiple sheets; and two or more main maps on multiple sheets. These would be described as:

1 map	[since only 1 sheet is involved this is implied and is not recorded]
1 map : \$b both sides	[since only 1 sheet is involved this is implied and is not recorded]
2 maps on 1 sheet	[or more than 2, main maps are on the same side of the sheet]
2 maps on 1 sheet : \$b both sides	[or more than 2, obviously on both sides of the sheet]
1 map on 2 sheets	[or on 4, 6, 8, or other number of sheets]
8 maps	[or 16, 30, 240, or any number of easily countable maps]
maps	[when a series or set is large and cumbersome to count or incomplete]

Other maps may also be somewhere on the sheet(s) but are not counted because they are deemed not to be main maps (see *publisher’s intent* combined with *title* above). These include inset maps, generically called “insets,” and ancillary maps. In *Cartographic Materials: A Manual of Interpretation for AACR2*, the definition of “Inset” is given as “A separate map positioned within the neat line of a larger map.” The definition for “Ancillary map” is given as “A generic term for small supplementary or secondary maps located either inside or outside the neat line of the principal or main map.” The key difference between these two types of additional maps is the “supplementary or secondary” aspect denoted with the ancillary map: an ancillary map is an *additional* and usually complementary map that assists the main map in explaining a concept (e.g., a map of volcanoes may have an ancillary map showing major earthquake epicenters to show the relationship between the two geological events); an inset map is an enlargement of an area of the main map, provided at a much larger scale than the main map so that the map user can see details more explicitly.