Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
(a division of the American Library Association)
Cataloging and Classification Section

Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

Report of the Task Force on the Review of the Draft
Descriptive Cataloging of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early-Modern Manuscripts (AMREMM)

The Task Force on the Review of the Draft *Descriptive Cataloging of Ancient, Medieval Renaissance, and Early-Modern Manuscripts* (AMREMM) was charged with preparing a detailed review of version 12 of the draft *AMREMM*. In particular, the task force was charged with identifying instances in which *AMREMM* is not consistent with the general rules in *AACR2R* as well as the specific rules for manuscripts and suggesting ways in which consistency with *AACR2R* could be achieved. The members of the task force were Thomas L. Amos, Western Michigan University; Matthew Beacom, Yale University; Melissa Conway, Uncataloged Manuscript Control Center/DeRicci Census Project Update; Brad Eden, University of Nevada. Las Vegas; Daniel W. Kinney (Chair), State University of New York at Stony Brook; Gertrude Koh, Dominican University, GSLIS; Gabriele I. Kupitz, Brigham Young University; Maria Oldal, The Pierpont Morgan Library.

The purpose of *Descriptive Cataloging of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early-Modern Manuscripts* (*AMREMM*) is to provide guidance in creating bibliographic records for pre-modern manuscripts and to supplement *AACR2R*, chapter 4. As stated in the introduction, *AMREMM* is intended to be applied to various forms of pre-modern manuscripts (i.e., fragments, loose leaves, single and multiple-sheet letters, archival records, legal documents, rolls, bound codices). With the exception of published facsimiles, *AMREMM* may also be applied to microform, photographic, and electronic reproductions of manuscripts. *AACR2R* does not provide the kind of precise and detailed description and analysis that is required for pre-modern manuscripts because of their historical, artistic, or literary value. *AMREMM* is based on *AACR2R*, and *AACR2R* is to be followed when there is no specific provision otherwise in *AMREMM*. This report is a compilation of comments and suggestions by members of the task force. General observations are presented first followed by comments pertaining to specific rules and sections. The examples of the application of MARC21 to bibliographic records for manuscripts that are provided in *AMREMM* were considered to be out of the scope of the charge to the task force. The document, however, contains 30 pages of MARC examples. The lack of fixed field codes, errors in indicators and subfield coding, and certain interpretations of the format suggest that it should be reviewed rigorously and commented on by a MARBI task force.

General Observations:

The terms "ancient," "medieval," "Renaissance," and "early-modern" as applied to manuscripts are not really defined. Some dates would be helpful. In addition, the rules do not clearly define a target group of users.

Some portions of the rules seem to reflect concerns and practices of descriptive bibliography. Authors of printed manuscript catalogs are usually scholars in the field of manuscript studies who are recording the end results of original scholarship and who are putting a great emphasis on personal authorship. These catalogs may or may not be endorsed by the institution in possession of the described items. While it is quite obvious that *AMREMM* builds on the collective wisdom of all those who produced published manuscript catalogs, it is doubtful that *AMREMM* would be a guideline for the production of future printed catalogs.

Some streamlining, simplification, clarification, and conformity to *AACR2R*, the LCRIs, and the MARC Format would be useful if the rules are designed to assist catalogers in libraries and museums.

The use of the terms "Optionally" or "Optional addition" printed in italics instead of "If desired" would place the text stylistically in line with *AACR2R* and add clarity to the instructions.

There is no section devoted to uniform titles. Rules 25.13 and 25.22B in *AACR2R* together with the available rule interpretations should be integrated into *AMREMM*. *AMREMM* falls short of explaining and consistently applying the uniform titles that are unique to manuscripts. The guidelines do not make it clear that manuscripts often have two uniform titles: a heading for the intellectual content and a heading for the manuscript as a physical entity. The latter is referred to "uniform manuscript heading" in *AMREMM* and it is often, but not always, the shelfmark of a manuscript. Rule 25.13A1b in *AACR2R* deals with this concept of double headings. Common examples of this case are liturgical manuscripts and manuscripts containing sacred scripture. When the authorship is unknown or diffuse and no other uniform title can be assigned, a manuscript has only a single uniform title identifying both the intellectual content and the physical entity. In such cases the heading may take one of two forms: the repository designation or the byname.

Example for a shelfmark that identifies both the intellectual content and the physical object:
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Manuscript. Clm 849 (n 97071904).

Example for a byname that identifies both the intellectual content and the physical object:
Cuoco napoletano (n 98100941)

Scholars and curators in the field of manuscript studies use the shelfmark as a unique identifier for a manuscript. The "usage" criteria in *AACR2R* for the construction of name and uniform title headings for manuscripts have resulted in the use of popular names and bynames based on commercial facsimile publications. Popular names and bynames are mostly arbitrary. They vary

from source to source and change over time. The publication of *AMREMM* provides the Anglo-American cataloging community with the opportunity to discuss and possibly modify this practice to prefer the shelfmark over popular names and bynames as the source for constructing uniform titles for manuscripts. In *AMREMM*, "uniform manuscript heading" (should be "uniform title") is discussed under added entry access in Appendix A. Uniform titles of manuscripts may appear as main entries. It might be helpful to include an appendix in *AMREMM* providing instructions on the construction of uniform titles for manuscripts. The instructions could either explain the current rules with lots of examples, or outline a net approach that prefers shelfmark uniform titles to byname uniform titles.

A page stating that area 8, standard number, does not apply should be included for consistency, since this is done for areas 3 and 6.

An index to *AMREMM* for the convenience of those consulting the document would be a valuable addition.

Comments pertaining to specific sections and rules in *AMREMM*:

OC. Punctuation
This rule contains an optional provision for double punctuation. In rare book cataloging, it may be important to preserve double punctuation to facilitate version/copy identification. In most cases this feature reveals something about the physical carriers of a certain text. Although they may contain a version of the same text, manuscripts by nature are unique, and bibliographic records for manuscripts will not be matched against one another in the way that the records for copies of early printed books are. Double punctuation was never applied to manuscript descriptions, and the introduction of this feature to *AMREMM* should be justified. If it does not contribute substantially to cataloging and retrieval, it should be omitted.

1. Title and statement of responsibility area
Terms designating titles need clarification. These should be in line with definition and use in *AACR2R*. The treatment of titles in cataloging codices is closer to book cataloging than to the cataloging of archival collections. If the material to be cataloged can be more appropriately described by applying rules found in Henson's *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* (*APPM*), then *APPM* should be used and not *AMREMM*.

While it is important to point out that manuscripts, as opposed to printed items, may have titles coming from different sources and supplied at different times, it is counterproductive to divide the categories of titles and the rules governing their transcription in the title area further than they are in *AACR2R*. With the acknowledgement of the source and time period in a note, the result of applying *AMREMM* guidelines is the same as applying *AACR2R* for recording titles and statements of responsibility.

The introduction of the word "formal" presents difficulties. The word "formal" carries the meaning of being artificial, supplied, imposed upon. The use of "formal" in *AMREMM* means exactly the opposite. It means the transcription of a title as it appears on the item to be cataloged. In *APPM* "formal title" means a title supplied at one point in time to cover a collection of material that never had a title to begin with. It is not necessary to introduce the "formal" title categories in *AMREMM*, and the following changes are suggested: "Formal title and statement of responsibility" should be "Title and statement of responsibility." "Formal title proper" should be "Title proper." "Formal statement of responsibility" should be "Statement of responsibility." Consistent application of *AACR2R* categories and terminology works quite well for manuscripts. No matter how the titles are labeled, the catalog record ends up looking the same. The precise source and dating of information is recorded in a note.

1A2.2.1. General rule
There is no guidance about arabic and roman numerals vs. numbers expressed as words.

1B1 "Do not abridge the formal title proper."
In *AMREMM*, most examples of titles proper (titles appearing in the manuscripts) are cited from published manuscript catalogs. Printed catalogs do not have the space concerns that a MARC bibliographic record has. Printed catalogs also have a scholarly agenda, which a MARC catalog record can not and must not claim. It is debatable whether a full title transcription adds extra value to a MARC record. Full title transcription beyond a certain point should be optional. It could be left to the cataloger's judgement or to the cataloging institution's needs to decide how much of the title should be transcribed. Most retrieval in an online environment will be done on uniform and supplied titles.

Catalogers at some institutions with manuscript holdings or with reproductions of manuscripts may not have the expertise to provide a full title transcription and they should not be mandated to do so. They should be given the option to provide a title from sources other than the chief source of information as it is defined in *AMREMM*. Without sufficient expertise, an attempt at full title transcription may yield unhelpful or misleading results even with the detailed instructions for transcription found in *AMREMM*. Scholars who pursue the study of a particular manuscript will take the catalog record as a pointer and will conduct their own research. They will provide their own version of title transcriptions in scholarly publications.

1B1.3 and 1F8
It might be better to put a correct version of the title/statement of responsibility in brackets and place the incorrect or obsolete title in a note. If appropriate, an added entry can be made for the incorrect or obsolete title. This would seem more in keeping with rule 21.4C in *AACR2R* for works erroneously or fictitiously attributed to a person or corporate body. It is also more consistent with the directives in *AMREMM* under 4B3 for treating a fictitious place and/or date.

1B1.4.2
Neither *AACR2R* nor *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books* (*DCRB*) encloses the mark of omission in square brackets. The inclusion of the supplied [et al.] is also absent in them. There

is no reason why *AMREMM* should differ in this from *AACR2R*. The addition of "[…et al.]" appears to be arbitrary and unnecessary. *AMREMM* should be brought in line with *AACR2R*. The use of "[... et al.]" in the MARC coding examples should also be reviewed.

There is no reason for a title selected as the collective title of the item to be repeated in the contents note (cf. *AACR2R* 1.1G). *AMREMM* should follow *AACR2R* guidelines for titles. Other instances of repeating titles should be reviewed and preferably removed from *AMREMM*.

1B1.4.3 (p. 27)
The sentence that reads "As a matter of practical consideration, it is generally not desirable to include more than three separate titles within a collective title" should be reviewed for style. It is simply instructing the cataloger to apply the rule of three.

1B1.4.3
It is unprecedented in *AACR2R* that titles included in area 1 are repeated in the contents note. This rule is also lacking in the concordance and should be connected to rules 1.1G3 and 4.1G1 in *AACR2R*.

1B1.4 is missing from the concordance on p. 120 of *AMREMM*. It should be connected to *AACR2R* 1.1G1 and 4.G1.

1B2.3.1. Content date
1B2.3.2. Letters
1B2.3.3. Legal documents and archival records
The rules in this section contradict the guidelines in *APPM*. Two sets of rules for the same type of materials may result in confusion and hinder machine retrieval. Systems are instructed to look for information in a specific field and subfield of the MARC record. Retrieval is successful only if information is recorded consistently. *APPM* was compiled to augment *AACR2R* for certain types of materials (just as *AMREMM* is attempting to do the same for ancient, medieval, Renaissance, and early-modern manuscripts). There is no need for *AMREMM* to revert back to pre-*APPM AACR2R* rules. *APPM* should be followed whenever possible.

1D. Parallel titles.
1D1 could use an example to make the rule clearer. Clarification is also needed for 1D2, which does not seem to allow for recording parallel titles in area 1.

1E. Other title information
See comments under 1B1.1 above.

1F8. An example illustrating this rule would be helpful.

4B2. An example illustrating this rule would be helpful.

4C. Place of production
AMREMM prescribes including the place of production in area 4. The manuscript cataloging community would be very much in favor of doing this. However, the guidelines ought to indicate that this is a major departure from *AACR2R*, which does not record this information in area 4 for Manuscripts, Graphics, and 3-D (presumably because all three types are unpublished, and *AACR2R* is geared to cataloging published material).

It's not clear why the rule begins by describing how to supply place information that is lacking. It surely ought to begin by instructing how to transcribe existing information, and then treat cases where this information is lacking. A rewrite of *AMREMM* 4C is suggested as follows:

Proposed revised version of *AMREMM*:

Transcribe a place of production for an item from the prescribed source of information (see 0B2). Enclose in square brackets information about the place of production that is transcribed from a source other than the prescribed source.
(SEE *AACR2R* re book cataloging)

In cases where the cataloger judges that additional information would be helpful to identify the location, supply it after the transcribed place in brackets.

A Paris

(The example in *AMREMM* gives "Paris" although the text from which the place name is extracted reads: à Paris. *AACR2R* would use "Paris" but *DCRB*, with its emphasis on transcription, would use "A Paris"; *AMREMM* could go with the more exact transcription.)

In conventu Osnaburgensi [Germany]

(The example in *AMREMM* gives [Osnabruck], although the information exists on the item.)

[NEEDED: example where the information is transcribed from a source other than the chief source]

If the item contains no information about the place of production but the cataloger is able to supply it, enclose the information in brackets, applying 23.2A ("use the English form of the name …").
[Spain]
[Northern France]
[Diocese of Freising, Germany]

If the attribution of a place is conjectural, follow with a question mark.

[Siena?]

There is no need to insert a country unless the place name is obscure (cf. A Paris above, which is not qualified by France). Those doing research on the country level will get access via the added entry for place. The complete name of the country (including regions or counties) will appear in an added entry (see *AMREMM*, A3.1.1).

The section that begins "If a general area of production …" should be omitted. Issues of certainty about place (we know it was France, we think it might be Brittany, or even Le Conquet) should be addressed in the notes. The formatting proposed in *AMREMM*, Country/Region/City is non-*AACR2R*. Descriptive bibliographers use it, but *AACR2R* and *AMREMM* are cataloging codes.

Leave the last sentence ("If no place ...") as is.

4C1. Place of production
It might be helpful to mention including the original form of the place of production in a note (7B14) and to refer to A3.1.1, which deals with the creation of an added entry for the original name of the place of production

4D1. Date of production
This directive should include making a note for the date in its original form (7B14). The original form can be very helpful to scholars.

5C1. Support
The rule states to indicate in a note the animal from which the material that serves as the writing support came. An example of such a note would be helpful.

5C2. Illustrative matter
Given the historical importance of miniatures in many medieval manuscripts, it might be useful to have the option of including a count of illustrations within the statement for illustrative matter. Although rule 4.7B23 in *AACR2R* and rule 7A3 in *AMREMM* allow for this kind of information in notes, it would be helpful to have a count of illustrations in this part of the record for artistically significant manuscripts.

7B1.2. The word "possess" in the fifth sentence should be "possesses."

7B7.3. Quire signatures, leaf signatures, and catchwords.
The word "instead" appears twice in the second sentence, making an awkward construction.

7B19. Preferred form of citation/current shelfmark
"Record the current shelfmark of an item as its preferred form of citation…"

Catalogers in institutions other than the holding institution should not be supplying preferred forms of citation. Preferred forms of citation can not be made equal to shelfmarks. The term "current shelfmark" needs to be removed from the heading. For the *Book of Kells*, the preferred form of citation may be the popular name, *Book of Kells*. Some manuscripts do not have a shelfmark (e.g., the exultet roll in the Museo diocesano di Salerno, or in the Cathedral of Bari).

7B21. References to published treatments or editions
Both examples under 7B21 should be expanded to include a more complete bibliographic citation (cf. the examples in MARC21 for field 581). The wording in *AMREMM* gives priority to the text over the manuscript as a physical entity. The definition in MARC21 for the corresponding field includes references to exhibition and collection catalogs that include reproductions. References to reproductions are especially important for illuminated manuscripts, and *AMREMM* should include a provision for reproductions.

7B22. Additional physical form
Facsimile reproductions are distinct bibliographic entities as opposed to being an "additional physical form" of the original manuscript. Facsimile reproductions should be cited under 7B21. It is suggested that the first example under 7B21 be of a facsimile edition. Facsimile editions are often the most valuable resource for further study because they reproduce both text and decoration. Most facsimile publications are accompanied by extensive commentaries, which, in most cases, represent the state of scholarship at the time of publication. Listing facsimiles under 7B21 (MARC field 581) instead of under 7B20 (MARC field 530) would allow them to be retrieved along with other bibliographic references.

7B27. Cataloging history
This note should be omitted from *AMREMM*. No provision for cataloging history can be found in *AACR2R*, *DCRB*, or *APPM*. This note has its origin in descriptive bibliography and is not appropriate for a shared cataloging environment where the identity of the holding institution and the institution that is the source of cataloging is sufficient.

A3.1.2. Uniform manuscript heading
The last example gives the folio ranges as "ff. 1r-56r." It should be formulated as "fol. 1-56" (Only versos are marked, and the abbreviation for folio is "fol."). An example under 25.13B1c in *AACR2R* provides a similar formulation for folios.

Appendix C: Retrospective conversion of existing manuscript descriptions
It is suggested that Appendix C be omitted from *AMREMM*. The purpose of *AMREMM* is to guide catalogers in the creation of bibliographic records. This goal equally applies to the original cataloging process and to retrospective conversion projects. The descriptions, definitions, and instructions in Appendix C do not appear to be substantial enough to warrant inclusion in a set of cataloging rules.

Retrospective conversion differs from institution to institution. Guidelines for retrospective conversion projects are established according to the quality and quantity of legacy data, available personnel and financial resources, etc. Appendix C does not seem to contribute to the decision making process, which is unique to each institution.

Conclusion:

The members of the task force were unanimous in their praise of *AMREMM*. This excellent document well fills a specialized but real need for an extension to our cataloging rules and it will be a welcome tool for libraries with manuscript collections and collections of reproductions of manuscripts. Not only is *AMREMM* flexible enough to be adapted in most cases for records at varying levels of detail and complexity, but it is also clear enough to be understood by catalogers unfamiliar with medieval or Renaissance manuscripts.   Gregory Pass is to be commended for having considered and solved many of the most complicated issues in manuscript cataloging. He has also provided an ample bibliography--conveniently subdivided by category--and a glossary of technical terms. The comments and suggestions presented above are made with the intent of enhancing an already valuable document.