

**To:** Mary Larsgaard, chair  
Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access;  
Deborah Leslie, chair  
ACRL/RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee

**From:** Robert L. Maxwell, chair  
ALCTS/ACRL Task Force on Cataloging Rules for Early Printed Monographs

**Re:** Final Report of Task Force

At ALA Midwinter 2004, CC:DA initiated a task force to examine the cataloging rules concerning early printed monographs, AACR2 2.12–2.18. The task force was set up as a joint task force with the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Bibliographic Standards Committee, and was given the following charge:

The Task Force on Cataloging Rules for Early Printed Monographs is charged to investigate the use of the rules for early printed monographs in chapter 2 of AACR2 and to present in its final report answers to the four major questions posed in

[CC:DA/Attig/2003/4](http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/attig4.pdf) (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/attig4.pdf>):

- a. Are the special rules needed in AACR?
- b. If so, what should be the scope of the rules?
- c. Should such rules conform to either DCRM(B) or ISBD(A)?
- d. What principles should inform such rules?

This document constitutes the final report for consideration by CC:DA and BSC.

The Task Force was constituted in mid-February 2004 with the following members:

Robert L. Maxwell, Brigham Young University, chair  
Laurence S. Creider, New Mexico State University  
Robert C. W. Hall, Jr., Concord Free Public Library  
Eileen M. Heeran, University of Michigan  
M. Winslow Lundy, University of Colorado at Boulder  
Lucy Marks, Drew University Library  
Janice E. Matthiesen, University of California, Los Angeles  
R. Arvid Nelsen, University of California, San Diego  
Maria Oldal, The Pierpont Morgan Library  
Lenore Rouse, Yale University  
Brian Hillyard, National Library of Scotland, consultant

## Preliminary Survey

The Task Force decided that it should first undertake to try to find out who, if anyone, was using AACR2 2.12–2.18, and therefore in late March/early April 2004 sent the following query to a number of cataloging-related listservs, including ARLIS-L, ATLANTIS-L, AUTOCAT, EXLIBRIS, LIS-RAREBOOKS (UK Rare books e-mail list), MAPS-L, and PUBLIB:

A task force of ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access has been asked to examine the rules in AACR2 for cataloging of early printed materials (AACR2 2.12–2.18) and make recommendations, which will be forwarded to the Joint Steering Committee. Recommendations might include revising the rules to bring them more in line with other rare cataloging standards, or elimination of the rules altogether. The task force would therefore like to hear from those in the cataloging community who use AACR2 2.12–2.18. Please contact me at (e-mail address) by (date) if you use these rules, even if only occasionally, and would be willing to respond to some brief questions about your cataloging practices regarding rare materials.

Twenty-one of the 32 respondents to the query said they use 2.12–2.18. The geographic distribution of those libraries that apply 2.12–2.18 includes 11 libraries from the United Kingdom, eight from the United States, and one each from Ireland and Israel. Some of these use AACR2 in addition to DCRB; others use AACR2 exclusively. The main category of U.S. catalogers who used AACR2 rather than DCRB seemed to be those at libraries with few rare or pre-1801 materials, but who found the need for some "extra" descriptive conventions and perhaps did not have the expertise or staff to warrant learning the ins and outs of DCRB; there are perhaps also some U.S. libraries that are not aware of DCRB as a descriptive standard, though there was no evidence of this from the small number of responses to the survey.

## More Detailed Survey

During May 2004 a more detailed questionnaire was prepared for the 21 librarians who indicated that they apply 2.12–2.18 and who responded in the first survey that they would be willing to answer more questions. The full survey instrument is included in this report in an appendix.

This second survey was distributed at the end of May. Responses came from eleven libraries (4 American, 7 British) ranging in size from 13,000 to 6,000,000 volumes and cataloging from 5 to 2500 early printed monographs annually. All eleven respondents use 2.12–2.18 and eight of them also apply 2.0–2.11. Some of the libraries use a combination of other cataloging rules: DCRB (6), the CILIP Rare Books Group rules (5), or their own local rules (5). Only one library reported using 2.12–2.18 exclusively. The date of imprint was cited by ten libraries as the criterion for deciding to apply 2.12–2.18, but several libraries also noted other reasons. Nine of the respondents found that the rules in 2.12–

2.18 do not fully meet their needs in the cataloging of early printed monographs. Several commented that because of that inadequacy they supplement with other rules: DCRB, the CILIP rules, or their own local rules.

When asked to identify specific rules that are insufficient and to suggest revisions, respondents mentioned eight rules by number. Perhaps the most important comments concerned rules 2.14B (alternative titles should be recorded and not omitted), 2.14C (mottoes, dedications, etc., sometimes should be recorded), 2.14E (need for examples of 'usage of the text' re: I/J and U/V/VV), and 2.18D (need for guidance in giving details of signatures including the description and name of special characters that are often used to sign signatures).

Respondents frequently requested more information in 2.12–2.18 on incunabula, transcription (particularly of early printed abbreviations), diacritics, and copy-specific information. More examples were also requested. Some respondents also indicated a desire for guidance on additional access points for printers or former owners, identification of thesauri for terms used in 2.17B, 2.18E, and 2.18F, and “something on genre.”

The Task Force members have concluded that they probably were unsuccessful in finding the best avenue to reach other catalogers who use rules 2.12–2.18. However, those catalogers whom the surveys did reach provided thoughtful comments concerning the relevance of the rules for early printed materials in AACR and supported retention of those rules.

## Discussion of the Questions Posed in the Charge

### A. Are special rules needed in AACR?

The Task Force believes that special rules for rare materials remain necessary in AACR for the following reasons:

1. Rare materials are for the most part cataloged following the same principles as other materials of the same format/content/mode of issuance, etc. However, because of their nature they often require somewhat more in depth treatment, which can be fairly easily summarized in the code, as currently. Non-specialist catalogers also need help interpreting the complex title pages and physical make-up that frequently characterize early materials.

2. The main specialized rare materials rules, *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials* (DCRM) (formerly *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*), are a specifically American set of rules, authored by the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section's Bibliographic Standards Committee and published by the Library of Congress. While they are widely used outside of the United States in no way can they be said to be “official” rules elsewhere, particularly since non-U.S. constituents have little or no voice in their creation and revision.

3. The Task Force has discovered that there are catalogers within the United States who do use the AACR rare materials rules rather than DCRB, so there is a need even in the U.S. community.

B. If so, what should be the scope of the rules?

*Level of Detail.* The Task Force recommends that the scope, defined as level of detail of the rules in AACR, remain about the same as it is currently.

*Types of Materials Covered.* However, just as DCRB is expanding its scope, as DCRM, to include all sorts of rare materials besides rare books, we recommend that the scope of the rules in AACR also be expanded to include other types of rare materials, including rare maps, music, and serials.

*Chronological Scope.* DCRM is also expanding the rare materials rules to include rules for materials produced in the post-handpress period, i.e., for materials produced throughout the 19th century and to a certain extent right up to the present. The Joint Steering Committee might want to consider expanding the chronological scope of the rare materials rules in AACR. The Task Force does not make a specific recommendation on this aspect of the scope of the rules. One consideration might be the difficulty of defining when the rare materials rules should and should not be applied, which will be fairly extensively discussed in DCRM. Such a discussion would probably not be appropriate for the level of detail of these rules in AACR, and so it might be more appropriate simply to make an arbitrary chronological cutoff, e.g., 1801, or perhaps slightly later, such as 1825.

C. Should such rules conform to either DCRM(B) or ISBD(A)?

The Task Force recommends that these rules should conform to DCRM (not necessarily only to the “B” [Books] section of DCRM), since DCRM, though not official outside the United States, is the most fully worked out and most widely used standard for rare materials cataloging. Most fully cataloged records for rare materials in shared databases conform to DCRM standards, and so it would be peculiar for records cataloged under AACR to differ substantially from DCRM records (e.g., in matters of transcription or physical description). One of the principles of the DCRM revision has been that DCRM will only depart from AACR if there is a valid rare materials reason. Therefore in making this recommendation the Task Force is not setting DCRM above AACR, but it does believe that the two standards should conform to each other as much as possible.

The Task Force does not feel the same concern about conformity to ISBD(A).

D. What principles should inform such rules?

AACR2 rules for rare and early materials should provide descriptions that are detailed enough to allow users to identify different manifestations of materials and to make a decision as to whether or not they wish to consult them. The fact

that rare materials are usually kept in closed stacks makes it particularly important that the catalog record for such materials be detailed enough to act as a reliable surrogate for the item itself.

The Task Force believes that these rules should be consistent with DCRM without attempting to duplicate the latter in its entirety. It is understood that the rules should remain primarily a resource for the non-specialist cataloger who must deal with rare materials, providing sufficient guidance in those areas where additional or more precise information is mandatory (e.g., details about the physical make-up of incunabula and later printed materials). The rules should contain a caveat directing the user to the more comprehensive rules in DCRM if additional guidance is needed.

### AACR3

Rapid developments with respect to the third edition of AACR, particularly the possibility that a first draft of Part I might be prepared by this Fall, is of concern to the Task Force. It is important that revision of the rules for early printed monographs be included in this first draft. We would like to make the following points:

1. The rules for rare materials, including early printed monographs, should not be separated into a special section as they are now. They should, instead, be arranged as appropriate with the other rules, e.g., rules about the title and statement of responsibility area with the other rules for this area, those about the publication, distribution, etc., area with other rules for this area, etc. Most of these rules should be in the first, general, chapter, not in a chapter about printed books, wherever that will appear in the new edition.
2. Rules applying to specific carriers (e.g., printed books, maps, scores, etc.) should be in the chapter appropriate to that carrier, e.g., rules for the physical description of early printed books should be found in the chapter that contains other rules for the physical description of printed books.
3. Similarly, rules applying to specific modes of issuance (e.g., rules for treatment of rare serials) should be in the chapter appropriate to that mode of issuance.
4. Because the Task Force has recommended that the rules for early printed monographs be revised to bring them in line with *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials*, more is needed than simple rearrangement of the current rules. (Note: The rules are in need of at least some revision even if the Joint Steering Committee does not agree that they should conform to DCRM.) Some body needs to be charged with suggesting revised language since it seems possible that the general editor of AACR3 will not be conversant with the needs of rare materials or be familiar with *DCRM*. The members of the Task Force are willing to undertake this task if the Joint Steering Committee requests.

## **The Future of the Task Force**

Although in its original charge it was anticipated that the Task Force would complete its work by Midwinter 2005 and be disbanded, it looks as though there may be more work beyond that time. At the JSC's request, the Task Force might be asked to submit suggested language to the editor of AACR3; and there is discussion of a joint CC:DA / BSC program at Annual 2006 about the relationship between DCRM and the AACR rules. Members of the Task Force have expressed their willingness to continue working, therefore, beyond the original completion date of Midwinter 2005 if CC:DA and BSC desire.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Maxwell, Chair

ALCTS/ACRL Task Force on Cataloging Rules for Early Printed Monographs

APPENDIX

Second (More Detailed) Survey Instrument

1. What rules do you use in the descriptive part of bibliographic records for early printed monographs? (answer all that apply)

- 1a. AACR2 2.0-11?
- 1b. AACR2 2.12-18?
- 1c. Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books (DCRB)?
- 1d. International Standard Bibliographic Description of Older Monographic Publications (Antiquarian) (ISBD(A))?
- 1e. CILIP Rare Books Group rules (Guidelines for the Cataloguing of Rare Books)?
- 1f. Local rules?
- 1g. Other? (Please specify)

If you responded "b" to question 1, please answer questions 2-8. If "b" was not one of your answers to question 1, please skip to question 9.

2. Do you use AACR2 2.12-18 exclusively when you create the descriptive portion of original bibliographic records for early printed monographs?

3. If you use 2.12-18 exclusively, why did you make the decision to use those rules? (Answer all that apply)

- 3a. Convenience of information located in AACR2?
- 3b. Lack of availability of DCRB?
- 3c. DCRB appears more complex than required?
- 3d. AACR2 rules preferred to those offered by DCRB on the same topic? (specify rules)
- 3e. Didn't know about DCRB or don't have access to it?
- 3f. Formal decision never made, just followed AACR2?
- 3g. Other reasons?

4. What criteria do you use to decide which materials to describe using 2.12-18?

- 4a. Date of the imprint?
- 4b. Subject matter?
- 4c. Format?
- 4d. Language?
- 4e. Other?

5. How do your copy catalogers approach records for early printed monographs found in the bibliographic utilities?

- 5a. Accept them as they are regardless of the code under which they were created?
- 5b. Edit them to reflect application of 2.12-18?

5c. Accept them if they are created according to DCRB, but otherwise edit if 2.12-18 needs to be applied?

6. If you use 2.12-18, do those rules meet all of your needs in the cataloging of early printed monographs?

7. If the paragraphs in 2.12-18 do not meet your needs, what revisions or additions to those paragraphs would you find helpful?

8. If you use 2.12-18 in conjunction with DCRB, in what cases do you do so?

If you responded "a" to question 1, please answer questions 9-10.

9. Do you use the main part of AACR2 Chapter 2 (2.0-11) exclusively for the descriptive part of the bibliographic record when you originally catalog early printed monographs?

10. If you use 2.0-11, do you find the need to supplement with other rules that are more specific to early printed monographs? Which rules?

11. What type of library do you work in? academic, governmental, public, research, special, or some other type (please specify)?

12. What is the size of your library? Small, medium, or large (or give an approximate number of volumes held)?

13. How large is your collection of early printed monographic materials? (Give approximate number of volumes if possible)

14. How many early printed monographs do you catalog per year?

15. To which bibliographic utilities does your library contribute cataloging records?

16. Which online system does your library use?

17. What materials and formats do you catalog?

17a. Rare materials only?

17b. All materials and formats received by the library?

17c. Early books and non-book formats?

17d. Maps, Music, Archives, Manuscripts, Serials, Microformats, Moving image materials (videos, DVDs), electronic resources? (indicate all that are appropriate)

18. Do you have any other comments?