

**Minutes (Draft)**  
**Bibliographic Standards Committee**

Virtual Meeting

Zoom, Thursday, September 20, 2018

2:00 - 3:00 pm EDT



1. Introductions and quick housekeeping (Francis Lapka)
2. Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Manuscripts) (Margaret Nichols)
3. Standard Citation Forms (Ann Myers)
4. Web Resources for the Rare Materials Cataloger (Matthew Ducmanas)

Appendix A: “DCRM(MSS) and AMREMM: A Merger Proposal”

Members present: Francis Lapka, Yale Center for British Art (chair); Katelyn Borbely, ProQuest; Amy Brown, John Burns Library, Boston College; Brenna Bychowski, Beinecke Library, Yale University; Kalan Knudson Davis, University of Minnesota; Alison Greenlee, Wayne State University; Elizabeth Hobart, Penn State University; Linda Isaac, Harvard University, Houghton Library; Jason Kovari, Cornell University; Deborah J. Leslie, Folger Shakespeare Library; Michelle Mascaro, University of California San Diego; Honor Moody, Harvard Library (CC:DA liaison); Kate Moriarty, Saint Louis University (secretary); Iris O’Brien, British Library; Brian Stearns, University of Alberta; Amy Tims, American Antiquarian Society.

Visitors: Jeff Barton, Princeton University; Erin Blake, Folger Shakespeare Library; Alison Bridger, Wisconsin Historical Society; Valerie Buck, Brigham Young University; Katharine Chandler, Library of Congress; Abigail Connick, Smith College; Ellen Cordes, Yale University, Lewis Walpole Library; Diane Ducharme, Yale University; Matthew Ducmanas, Temple University; Emily Epstein, University of Colorado Health Sciences Library; Meredith Hale, University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Sarah Hamerman, Princeton University RBSC; Matthew Haugen, Columbia University; Sarah Hoover, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; Jennifer MacDonald, University of Delaware; Martha McTear, UC Santa Barbara; Ann Myers, Stanford University; Jennifer Nelson, Robbins Collection, Berkeley Law; Margaret Nichols, Cornell University; Liz O’Keefe, retired; Maria Oldal, Morgan Library & Museum; Audrey Pearson, Yale University, Beinecke Library; Felicia Piscitelli, Texas A&M University; Jessie Sherwood, Robbins Collection, Berkeley Law; Brittney Washington, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas-Austin.

### **1. Introductions and quick housekeeping**

The Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC) chair opened the meeting with a few points of online meeting etiquette and a request for attendees to sign in on the online attendance form. Because of technical difficulties, agenda item 2 was moved to the end.

### **3. Standard Citation Forms**

The Standard Citation Forms editorial group (SCF) sought feedback on a new submission form (<https://rbms.info/scf/submit/>), which would streamline the group's work by automatically populating fields in the WordPress program that feeds the [Standard Citation Forms for Rare Materials Cataloging](#) resource.

Changes from the current form include the addition of a second Author field, multiple Notes, Subjects, Reprint, and Supplement fields, and a new Online Version field. The form no longer has the "OCLC # for records in which the bibliography has been cited" field.

There was general approval for SCF to move forward with the form. Suggestions included

- Add introductory text at the top of the form that welcomes the submitter and provides instructions, including:
  - In general, copy and paste information from the OCLC record.
  - If there is no author, type "none" in the required Author field.
- Make the "Notes" and "Subjects" labels singular to match the other labels and avert the inclusion of multiple notes or subjects in the same text box.
- Since editor names are entered in the Author field so that they are indexed, change the field to read: Author/Editor.
- Instead of duplicate fields, present one field with a button allowing the submitter to add text boxes. For example, there would be one Note field, with a down arrow to add more.
- Add more Author fields.
- Explore a sustainable way for SCF to follow up with the proposer following a submission. One possibility is a checkbox on the form requesting a status update. (Formerly, SCF emailed each proposer when their citation was published but the increase in submissions has made that burdensome.)

SCF will make revisions and submit the updated form for BSC approval.

#### **4. Web Resources for the Rare Materials Cataloger**

The Working Group for the Review of Web Resources for the Rare Materials Cataloger has transitioned to an ongoing editorial group of two or three members.

The editors submitted two design options for feedback, one in which the resource is embedded in the RBMS website <http://rbms.info/testweb-resources-for-the-rare-materials-cataloger/>, another in which it is a stand-alone WordPress resource, similar to SCF: <https://goo.gl/cmCn7p>. It is likely that a dedicated search function would only be possible with option 2, the stand-alone version. Opinion leaned heavily in favor of the stand-alone version for its search capability, esthetics, branding, and ease of updating. The editorial group will move forward with that version.

There was general agreement to tighten the scope of the resource by omitting links to resources pertaining to general cataloging. Further and continued evaluation of the resource's content will resume once the new site is live. As part of its initial review, the Working Group checked the resource for and eliminated bad links, a task that the new editorial group will continue periodically.

## **2. Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Manuscripts)**

In addressing their charge to make recommendations regarding “a future set of rules for describing and cataloging manuscripts,” the editors of *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Manuscripts)* (DCRM(MSS)) sought feedback on their proposal, “DCRM(MSS) and AMREMM: A Merger Proposal” (see Appendix A). The editorial group recommended that a group of experts integrate DCRM(MSS) and *Descriptive Cataloging of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Modern Manuscripts* (AMREMM), and suggested DCRM(MSS) serve as the basis of the standard, adding rules where there is an AMREMM reason to deviate from DCRM(MSS) instruction. There was general agreement on merging the two standards.

As the integration would likely involve making the standard compatible with RDA and incorporating DCRM(MSS)/AMREMM into the RBMS Policy Statements, the BSC chair will charge a group to evaluate the applicability of RDA to describing individual manuscripts. BSC members and non-members interested in serving on the group should contact the chair. The DCRM(MSS) editors suggested that users of DCRM(MSS) and AMREMM be surveyed to determine how many of them have access to the RDA Toolkit.

Before closing, the chair announced that there will probably be one more meeting before ALA Midwinter 2019. The meeting closed at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted September 24, 2018 by Kate Moriarty, RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee secretary.

## Appendix A

### DCRM(MSS) and AMREMM: A Merger Proposal

#### Introduction

The final part of the original charge of the DCRM(MSS) Editorial Team was to make recommendations concerning “a future set of rules for describing and cataloging manuscripts.” The charge continues:

Possibilities include: 1) a full revision of AMREMM that incorporates rules for modern manuscripts; 2) a two-component DCRM module for manuscripts (one component that has the same scope as the current AMREMM and a second component that picks up where AMREMM leaves off and covers modern manuscripts).

The DCRM(MSS) editorial team would like to suggest that DCRM(MSS) be combined with AMREMM to produce a single RDA-compliant standard for cataloging all manuscripts, from ancient to modern. The combined document could consist of either an interweaving of the two texts or the presentation of two separate components, one for modern manuscripts and the other for pre-modern ones. We think it would be clearer to have two separate components. Since most repositories contain more modern (post-1600) than pre-modern manuscripts, DCRM(MSS) could be used as the basis of the combined text. A small editorial team could be convened to assess the standards side by side and determine where AMREMM needs to diverge from DCRM(MSS). It should then become clear if the legitimate reasons to diverge, taken together, argue for keeping AMREMM as a separate standard, or whether they can be addressed by a supplement.

Four reasons for this proposed project are: a) AMREMM is now 15 years old; b) both AMREMM and DCRM(MSS) are pre-RDA; c) manuscripts are attracting increasing attention from both researchers and repositories as unique resources that support new directions in research and make an institution’s holdings distinctive; and d) combining DCRM(MSS) and AMREMM would give catalogers more flexibility in handling ambiguous cases such as documents and early modern manuscripts.

The introduction to the combined text should acknowledge our considerable debt to Gregory Pass and his collaborators for their trailblazing work in creating the first RBMS standard for describing manuscripts.

The combined text should be produced with full awareness of the ways in which medieval and earlier manuscripts differ from modern ones, both in how they are produced and in how scholars do research on them. Notable differences:

1. As Gregory points out in a recent email, before the printing press, all books in the Western world were manuscripts, “produced in more-or-less standard ways and intended for circulation and use (even if on a limited scale).” The surviving pre-early-modern codex manuscripts are more formal, self-conscious productions than most modern ones.

2. “Scriptorium era” manuscripts have physical characteristics that are important to researchers, but which are not covered in DCRM(MSS), such as prickings, rulings, signatures, hand decoration, and the like.

3. Scholars frequently do detailed textual analysis of medieval manuscripts to determine the order in which different versions of a given text appeared, or to establish an authoritative version of the text. On the other hand, early modern and modern documentary forms such as letters, diaries, etc. are often analyzed more for their sociological or historical content. Then again, detailed textual analysis is also done on modern literary manuscripts, with some of the same aims that scholars apply in studying pre-modern ones.

## **AMREMM and DCRM(MSS): Differences and Similarities**

### **Some differences:**

- AMREMM has a more detailed list of sources of information for the description (AMREMM oB1)
- Title and Statement of Responsibility: AMREMM requires a note on the source of title and SOR in all cases; DCRM(MSS) requires it only if the title is transcribed.
- AMREMM uses square brackets for devised titles as well as for interpolations in transcribed titles; DCRM(MSS) uses brackets only in the latter case
- DCRM(MSS) gives more detailed instructions on devising titles (AMREMM 1B1.6 vs. DCRM(MSS) 1B), including for specific types of works (AMREMM 1B2 vs. DCRM(MSS) 1B2-5)
- AMREMM includes more instructions for dealing with composite works
- AMREMM uses the GMD (General Material Designation); DCRM(MSS) uses the Material Type element for the manuscript’s method of production, etc.
- Edition/version Statement: AMREMM prescribes the use of Area 2 (edition/version statement), though only for cases where there is an explicit version statement on the item
- Place and Date of Production: AMREMM uses the Place and Date of Production area (Area 4) only for literary manuscripts; DCRM(MSS) uses it in all cases. AMREMM uses square brackets for place and/or date if the form they are given in differs from the form used in the manuscript itself.
- Extent: AMREMM includes description of the type of support, e.g. parchment, in the “other physical details” element (300 \$b); dimensions are given in mm; in addition to extent, both “other physical details” and dimensions are required elements

- Notes: AMREMM's list of required notes differs from DCRM(MSS)'s. AMREMM also provides for including a note on the item's shelfmark and former shelfmarks in the bibliographic record.
- Appendices: AMREMM includes an appendix on doing analytics, e.g. when it's called for to catalog individually the parts of a composite manuscript.

**Some similarities (AMREMM was, after all, one of the sources that DCRM(MSS) drew on):**

1. AMREMM and DCRM(MSS) are both structured essentially like AACR2, covering the different areas of description in the order in which the cataloger applies them.
2. Both standards acknowledge that transcription is less straightforward for manuscripts than for books. For instance, both acknowledge that the title may be absent, unreliable, etc. AMREMM notes that spelling was much more variable in the pre-modern period than later, there were copying errors, etc., so exact title transcription can be of limited usefulness. Both standards provide for devising a title or taking the title from reference sources.
3. Both standards have different rules for the title and statement of responsibility of literary manuscripts, of letters, and of legal documents.
4. AMREMM and DCRM(MSS) both instruct the cataloger to normalize place and date of production.
5. Both standards provide for describing the item in detail as a physical artifact as well as an intellectual creation.

**Some Remaining Issues**

1. We believe that DCRM(MSS) is usable for describing pre-modern manuscripts, provided that it is augmented with provisions specific to those early manuscripts. But will the content of DCRM(MSS) remain the same, or will it have to undergo major changes in order to be RDA'ized like the other DCRM manuals? Will these changes affect its utility for pre-modern manuscripts?
2. How will AMREMM fit in with RDA? Are medieval manuscripts too far removed from bibliographic description to fit in? Actually, this is a concern not just for AMREMM but for DCRM(MSS) too.
3. Who will do the work of revising AMREMM? Are there enough people with the subject/domain knowledge, but also a knowledge of bibliographic descriptive practices? (Note: Jennifer Nelson (Berkeley) is willing to be on the editorial team, and she knows a medieval manuscripts cataloger at Berkeley whom she recommends for this work, too; Jennifer McDonald knows a cataloger at the Schomberg whom she recommends.)

4. How will a revised AMREMM be made accessible to users? Through policy statements only (in which case, the cataloger has to have access to RDA)? As a stand-alone product? Our impression is that In the DCRM(MSS) workshops we've taught, about half the attendees have been archivists, who don't typically use RDA except for access points. (Also, although we can't prove it, we do think that there are people currently using AMREMM who will not have access to RDA, like some of the modern archival catalogers now using DCRM(MSS).) We suggest doing a survey of current users of AMREMM and DCRM(MSS) to determine how many of them have access to the RDA Toolkit.
5. What happens if RDA continues to undergo substantive changes while the combined, RDA-compliant manuscript standard is being put together?
6. RDA is based on FRBR, which doesn't apply well to manuscripts at all. Should we be even trying to shoehorn DCRM(MSS)/AMREMM into RDA?