



## Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access

CC:DA/Agenbroad/1

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To: American Library Association,  
ALCTS/CCS Committee on Cataloging:  
Description and Access

From: James E. Agenbroad

Subject: Nonroman Headings and References Proposal

### Background

The collections of Anglo-American public and research libraries have long included works in nonroman scripts for use of immigrants literate in such scripts and students of areas that use such scripts. AACR2 is the codification of consensus on the best practices to catalog (provide control and access for) these collections including works in nonroman scripts. In part 1 of AACR2 (1.0E) the descriptive elements are transcribed wherever practicable in the script in which it appears in the item itself. But in part 2 headings are always given in romanized form. In other words, if you can find where we file it in an unfamiliar roman alphabet you can perhaps see and read the title, etc. of the item you seek in a familiar, 'vernacular' script. Readers seeking books in the roman alphabet are not forced to detour through such a quagmire. The unavailability of filers who could arrange cards with headings in other writing systems was probably the pragmatic origin of this approach. In "Romanization reexamined" (*LRTS*, 21:1, 1977, p.8) the late Sumner Spalding described this approach: "The universal catalog. The catalog in which all items in the collection are entered in a single alphabet from A to Z regardless of language, regardless of form, regardless of subject. The American ideal." Then he gave his reaction: "Let me be the heretic who says 'Balderdash! The universal catalog (so far as author and title entries are concerned) is a snare and a delusion.' Our readers of non-roman-alphabet materials would be much better served by separate catalogs of author and title entries in the writing systems they read than they are now by a unified catalog that requires them to figure out what cabalistic transformations into roman letters have been made of the names and titles they could otherwise have found so easily."

To provide efficient access to Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) materials catalogers who use RLIN have created vernacular headings in addition to romanized ones since 1983; catalogers using OCLC have done so since 1984. Since later in the same decade catalogers using RLIN have been able to create vernacular headings for Cyrillic, Hebrew and Arabic script materials too. Romanized and vernacular headings need not be viewed as mutually exclusive; each has its proper place. "Generally

speaking, it can be said that for public use and information, whether it be a catalogue, a booklist or a publicity leaflet, they are likely to be more effective if it is in the script of the language concerned. The Romanised form of the script is, on the other hand, preferable for general use by the staff.” (Eric Clough and Jacqueline Quarmby. *A public library service for ethnic minorities in Great Britain*. Library Association, 1978, p.296) Bela H. Weinberg, Hans Wellisch and Joan Aliprand have also written about romanization and the ways technology (e.g., Unicode(tm)) could ameliorate its adverse impact access to these materials.

The following proposed changes would allow vernacular headings as optional additional access points.

### **Proposed Revisions**

#### **<<< 22.3C3. Optional treatment of names written in a nonroman script.**

Optionally, when possible technically and appropriate to the item being cataloged, make additional access points in pertinent nonroman scripts for names entered under given name or surname. Use the conventions of the script as shown in vernacular and other reference works to determine the form of such access points. Make appropriate references to such access points. >>>

<<< **23.2B2.** Optionally, when possible technically and appropriate to the item being cataloged, make additional access points in pertinent nonroman scripts. Use the conventions of the script as shown in vernacular and other reference works to determine the form of such access points. Make appropriate references to such access points. >>>

<<< **24.1B2.** Optionally, when possible technically and appropriate to the item being cataloged, make additional access points in pertinent scripts. Use the conventions of the script as shown in vernacular and other reference works to determine the form of such access points. Make appropriate references to such access points. >>>

<<< **25.2D2.** Optionally, when possible technically and appropriate to the item being cataloged, make additional access points in pertinent scripts. Use the conventions of the script as shown in vernacular and other reference works to determine the form of such access points. Make appropriate references to such access points. >>>

<<< **26.1B2.** When appropriate apply 26.1B1 to access points in nonroman scripts. >>>

<<< **26.1C2.** When appropriate apply 26.1C1 to access points in nonroman scripts. Make *see also* references among access points in other scripts for the same name or title. >>>

### **Assessment of impact**

The above changes would, I believe, harmonize AACR2 and current practice and encourage more vendors to enhance their products. Since complexity in headings also occurs in other scripts, rules for creating unique and consistent headings in other scripts are highly desirable for reliable retrieval. At present CJK catalogers have guidelines to promote such consistency. With Arabic script present practice is more varied. IFLA recently published a new edition of *Names of persons* but much work by

experts would still be needed. Coordination between CC:DA and CC:AAM could be helpful though scripts such as Greek, and Cyrillic are not in the latter's scope. Others can consider whether a separate publication analogous to the "ALA/LC romanization tables" would be more appropriate than expansion of AACR2. Another quotation from Sumner Spalding's article (page 11) may be appropriate: "If it should be asked how authority control in cases of names in non-roman-alphabet languages can be maintained, I would say that the authority control should be located in the catalog which uses the native writing system and should record any forms of name adopted for catalogs in other writing systems. A *see also* reference should be provided in the catalog of the native writing system to all forms used in other catalogs. Variant forms found in any given writing system should appear as references in the catalog of that system."

Thank you for your time and attention.

Regards,  
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*The above are purely personal opinions, not necessarily the official views of any government or any agency of any.* Phone: 202 707-9612; Fax: 202 707-0955; US mail: I.T.S. Dev.Gp.4, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington, D.C. 20540-9334 U.S.A.

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