
New Trends in Cataloging Rare and Special Materials

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ABSTRACT

NOTE FROM THE ISSUE EDITOR: At the time of this issue's printing, this report is the best official documentation of the American Library Association's effort to update and enhance the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM). Further progress on this important project can be found on the American Library Association's Rare Book and Manuscripts Section Web site.

To: RBMS Executive Committee

From: Deborah J. Leslie, chair, Bibliographic Standards Committee
(BSC)

Date: 9 April 2003

Re: DCRM Conference at Yale, 10–13 March 2003

I am pleased to report that the DCRM Conference, hosted by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library with support from Yale University Library, was enormously successful.

The specific goals of the conference as enumerated in the initial proposal letter we submitted to Alice Prochaska, Yale University Librarian, were to

1. Develop and articulate general principles of descriptive cataloging of rare materials as a whole;
2. Revise the existing DCRB (Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books) rules based on newly-articulated general principles and on ten years' experience cataloging with them;

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3. Develop guidelines for collection-level cataloging of rare books, and for applying DCRM(B) to machine-press books, and finally
4. Produce a draft of DCRM(B) ready for public comment.

Twenty-five people converged on the Beinecke Library in New Haven for four full days of meetings, only nine months after the conference's conception. The daily schedule comprised four ninety-minute working sessions punctuated with generous break and lunch times, and evenings free. The conferees were each assigned to two of six working groups which met in alternating sessions, which in turn alternated with plenary sessions. In all, each working group had five working sessions and the conferees met together in six plenary sessions. Each working group had on average eight members, including a leader, a recorder, and the drafter of a position paper prepared well in advance. Indeed, the work of all the groups began several months before the conference commenced; this preparation helped ensure the highest level of productivity of the conference sessions. The committee chairperson led, and the BSC secretary recorded notes for, the plenary sessions.

Topics of the six working groups were

1. General principles of rare material cataloging (Joe A. Springer drafter, Jackie Dooley leader);
2. Transcription of early letter forms (Deborah J. Leslie and Benjamin Griffin drafters, Brian Hillyard leader);
3. Rare book cataloging of machine-press books (Manon Thérout draft-er, Beth Russell leader);
4. Collection-level cataloging of rare books (Jain Fletcher drafter, Barbara M. Jones leader);
5. DCRB problems and lacunae (Deborah J. Leslie drafter, Laurence Cre-ider leader),
6. Editions, issues, and states, or, When to create a new record (John At-tig and Ann Copeland drafters, Robert Maxwell leader).

The goals of the conference were largely fulfilled. As of this time, the state-ment of general principles for the cataloging of rare materials prepared by Working Group 1 has been disseminated. This statement will stand on its own as well as be used in the introductory material of DCRM(B) and the other DCRM components. Likewise, the discussion on when to create a new record has also been disseminated, formed by Working Group 6 into a new general rule, 0B1. Working Group 4's work on collection-level cataloging takes the form of an appendix to DCRM(B), and is also available for pub-lic comment.

The remaining three working groups, 2, 3, and 5, were structured around adding, deleting, changing, and rearranging existing rules; their products will be seen in a revised draft of DCRM(B). With assistance, the BSC chair

will integrate the results of the working groups and provide a rough edit for discussion at the ALA annual meeting in Toronto. After that time, the work will be handed to a small editorial team to refine the draft. Draft materials can be found at: <http://www.folger.edu/bsc/dcrb/dcrbrev.html#dcrm>.

We have begun discussions with the Library of Congress about publishing DCRM(B). They published *Bibliographic Description of Rare Books* and its second edition, *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books*, but as an institution have had no direct involvement with this revision. Elizabeth Robinson, rare book team leader at the Library of Congress, is the BSC's liaison to LC and continues to attend meetings and involve herself in BSC activities, and was an active participant of the Yale Conference. In any case, no doubt the LC Cataloging Policy and Support Office will wish to review the document carefully. So while we do not yet have a publishing timeline, we nevertheless hope the whole process to be much expedited because of the productive work carried out by dedicated people in a location calculated to provide the best possible surroundings and conditions for our work.

The Beinecke Library under Barbara Shailor's direction were wonderfully generous and considerate hosts. Not only did they provide funding, without which there would have been no conference at all, but demonstrated the depth of their commitment to its success by liberally devoting facilities and staff time. Their marked attention to the immediate and ongoing needs of the working sessions, and equally to our human comforts in lodging and meals, sets a model for practical and gracious hospitality at its best.