

The Descriptive Cataloging for Rare Materials Task Force of the Association of College and Research Libraries/ Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (ACRL/RBMS) is charged to create an RDA-compatible set of guidelines for cataloging rare materials. This project, which will be called the RBMS Policy Statements, builds upon a legacy of rare materials cataloging standards developed primarily by RBMS and the Library of Congress, in collaboration with library colleagues throughout the Anglo-American cataloging community.¹

Current guidelines published by RBMS are collectively known as *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials* (DCRM), and include manuals for Books, published in 2006, Serials, published in 2008, Graphics, published in 2013, and Cartographic materials, published in 2016. The final manuals in this series -- for Music and Manuscripts -- will be published in the year to come. All DCRM guidelines, including those not yet published, are interpretations and extensions of AACR2. This means that they are, in places, not wholly compatible with RDA.

In 2013, the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee charged the present task force to undertake a complete revision of the DCRM manual for books, in order to make it compatible with RDA. Early on, however, the task force decided the revision should not be limited to books alone. Instead, the task force would attempt to consolidate the instructions for all formats currently included in the DCRM suite. This consolidated treatment of varying formats follows the principles of RDA itself, but it also drastically expands the immediate scope of the project. The task force decided that the new RDA-compliant and consolidated rules for rare materials would not be a true revision of DCRM, but would instead be considered an altogether new text.

Manuscripts were originally considered to be within the scope of formats for this project. However, as we began drafting the new guidelines, it became quickly apparent that the instructions for manuscripts were frequently outliers, requiring policies that differed from those for published material. Because of this, the task force has decided to defer treatment of manuscript material until after an initial version of our work is complete. The RDA Steering Committee (RSC) may soon establish a working group to consider treatment of archival materials. If such a group is formed, it will inform any RDA-DCRM treatment of manuscripts.

Structure: from DCRM to RBMS Policy Statements

In form and function, the RBMS Policy Statements will closely resemble existing policy statements available in the “Resources” section of the RDA Toolkit. RBMS Policy Statements will extend and refine RDA guidelines, with a network of links connecting corresponding rules, and will not repeat guidelines in RDA that are valid for the description of rare materials. This form of instructions represents a significant change from the existing DCRM manuals, in which guidelines from AACR2 are integrated with guidelines for rare materials. The DCRM manuals can, in large part, stand alone for guidance on the portions of a record concerning descriptive cataloging.

¹ For details, see the preface to *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 2011), <http://rbms.info/dcrm/dcrmb/DCRMB3.pdf>

Accustomed to this form of DCRM, the task force had originally proposed the creation of workflow documents that would weave together the texts of RDA and of the RBMS Policy Statements to create something similar to the experience of using the existing version of DCRM. The task force abandoned plans for this kind of workflow in the spring of 2015 following discussions with the JSC, who cited concerns about reproducing large amounts of RDA text within a separate set of guidelines. Instead, the new version of DCRM will take the form of a set of policy statements that extend RDA. Most instructions will be broad enough to be applied to all rare materials; as in RDA proper, some policy statements will specify exceptions or alternatives depending on format.

In the existing versions of DCRM, Library of Congress Rule Interpretations of AACR2 serve as the base text for the guidelines. For the forthcoming RBMS Policy Statements, the task force has decided not to use the Library of Congress-PCC Policy Statements as our default position. We made this change in order to remove an additional dependency from a system of guidelines that is already multi-layered. The decision was also made with an eye to setting up the RBMS Policy Statements for a more international user base. Additionally, we are working with an assumption that all or most of our instructions concerning music should be in line with the Music Library Association Best Practices.

The scope of our present work corresponds primarily to the RDA sections on recording attributes of Manifestations and Items (chapters 1-4) and relationships of Manifestations and Items (chapters 21-22 and 27-28). Systematically, we compare each instruction in RDA with the corresponding guidelines in the existing DCRM modules. Where there are differences, we consider whether there is a rare materials reason to differ. A rare materials reason to differ should be justified by the slightly different user tasks specific to rare materials. We apply the same analysis to the examples provided by RDA, asking whether there is a need for rare materials examples, even if the RDA guideline does not require a modification. Where our policy statements differ from RDA, we will almost always provide examples.

Broadly, there are three categories of policy statement content:

1. Guidelines for recording information *differently* than as instructed by RDA.
2. Guidelines that *build upon* the RDA instruction with additional details useful for rare materials cataloging.
3. Guidelines that treat a topic *not covered* by RDA.

2.3.3.2 Sources of Information	
<p>[RDA]</p> <p>Take parallel titles proper from any source within the resource. If the title proper is taken from outside the resource, take parallel titles proper from the same source.</p>	<p>[RBMS PS]</p> <p>Take parallel titles proper from the same source as the title proper (see 2.3.2.2).</p>

In the example above, the RBMS Policy Statement differs from RDA, because the user of rare materials expects title and statement of responsibility information to represent text that is on the title page, without the addition of text from other sources.

1.9.2.1 [Supplied Dates] Actual Year Known	
[RDA] If the actual year is known, record the year.	[RBMS PS] Indicate the basis for the conjecture in a note.
EXAMPLE [2003]	EXAMPLE [1876] Note on Publication Statement: Publication date from Bibliography of American

Here, the RBMS PS adds additional guidance to the RDA instruction. The addition reflects the importance of recording a justification for supplied dates.

1.7.5 Symbols	
[RDA] -	[RBMS PS] 1.7.5.x Rebuses Replace pictures in rebuses with the intended words in square brackets.
	EXAMPLE The [Bute] interest in the [city], or, The [bridge] in the [hole] Note on Title: Title in the form of a rebus. Bute represented as a boot

This RBMS Policy Statement -- on the treatment of rebuses -- is an example of a topic not explicitly covered in RDA.

RDA contains about a dozen instructions for “Early Printed Resources,” mostly in the form of exceptions or alternatives. Where these instructions are acceptable as is, the RBMS policy statement says only to apply the alternative or exception. In some cases, the RBMS policy statement is compatible with the exception, but provides more information. In a few places, our draft policy statement is not compatible with an RDA exception for early printed resources.

For example, RDA provides this instruction in Sources of Information (2.2.2.2):

Exception

Early printed resources. If an early printed resource (or a reproduction of it) lacks a title page, title sheet, or title card (or an image of it), use as the preferred source of information the first of the following sources that has a title:

- a) a colophon (or an image of a colophon)
- b) a cover or jacket issued with the resource (or an image of a cover or jacket)
- c) a caption (or an image of a caption)

The current draft of the RBMS policy statement suggests that the preferred source (for resources lacking a title page) should vary based on the type of material (monographic text, serial, music, etc.).

Ultimately, all RBMS Policy Statements should be compatible with RDA's instructions for early printed resources. If an RDA instruction is unsatisfactory, then our community needs to make a compelling case for revision. Review and revision of RDA's guidelines concerning early printed resources should take place with all stakeholders in mind. The RSC has recently appointed a rare materials working group composed of international membership.² This group will limit the scope of its work to the guidelines in RDA proper, assisting the RSC in developing the treatment of rare materials in RDA. Maintenance of RBMS Policy Statements will remain the purview of RBMS -- in the immediate term, at least.

As the DCRM task force reviews RDA, there are areas -- including areas outside of the exceptions for early printed resources -- where we feel strongly that what is needed is not a policy statement, but a revision to RDA proper. In such cases, we will submit revision proposals through the North American representative to the RSC.

RDA consists of a set of guidelines and a formally defined element set. To fully accommodate the description of rare materials, the task force is likely to propose a modest number of extensions or refinements to the RDA element set. For example, it may be useful to articulate a separate data element for signature statements; at the moment, such data is included with other notes on the extent of the manifestation. The RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee has charged a separate task force to explore the issue of data elements for rare materials description. The DCRM task force is working with that group by suggesting data elements that we see as candidates for addition to RDA.

Objectives of DCRM and the RBMS Policy Statements

The objectives of DCRM have remained consistent since their inception 35 years ago. They will not change much in the forthcoming policy statements. DCRM shares the general objectives of base standards such as AACR2 and RDA, with additional objectives that are important for users of special collections:

- Users must be able to distinguish clearly among different manifestations, and among variations within a manifestation.
- Users must be able to perform most identification and selection tasks without direct access to the materials.
- Users must be able to investigate the physical processes that produced the material, as well as post-production alterations.

These user tasks will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 1 of the RBMS Policy Statements.

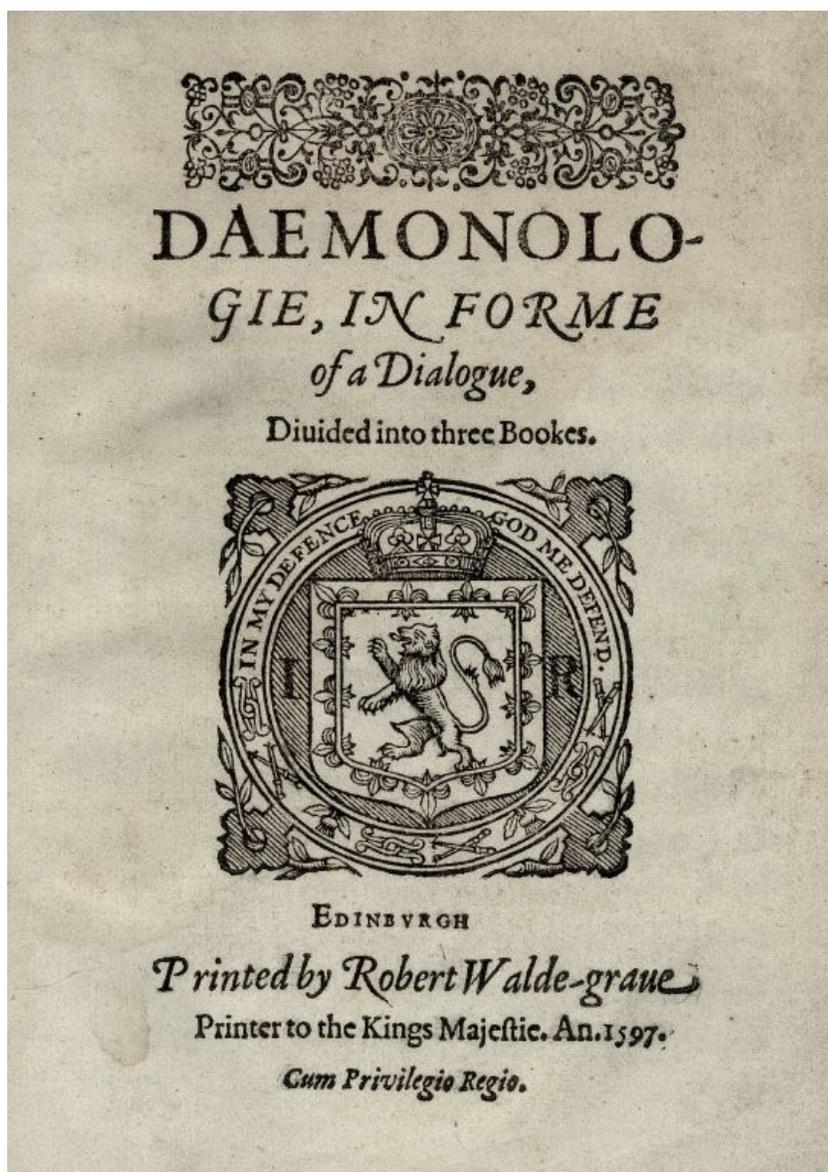
² RDA Steering Committee, "Terms of Reference for the RSC Rare Materials Working Group," <http://www.rda-rsc.org/sites/all/files/RSC-Chair-16.pdf>.

To fulfill these objectives, a description of a resource requires:

- full and accurate transcriptions,
- precise descriptions of the physical carrier, production processes, and post-production manipulations of the resource,
- detailed information on provenance and custodial history.

Fulfilling these objectives requires a modest number of significant differences between DCRM and RDA.

The first significant difference concerns sources of information. DCRM guidelines place a strong emphasis on representing what appears on the preferred source of information (which for rare materials, is usually a title page). In a DCRM description, it is never appropriate to record title or statement of responsibility information that does not appear in the preferred source. The notable exception is a devised title proper. For edition statements and imprint statements, DCRM requires the cataloger to make a note if information comes from anywhere other than the title page. RDA permits a much wider array of sources of information. For some elements, RDA allows us to transcribe information from anywhere within the resource, without making a note on the source.



For example, in the view of DCRM, King James I's *Daemonologie* (1597) lacks a statement of responsibility, because this information does not appear on the title page. However, RDA permits us to take the statement of responsibility from anywhere within the book. Because of this, "James Rx." can be recorded in this element in an RDA description; in the DCRM description, the information is recorded in a note.

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	RDA	DCRM(B) applied with AACR2
245 10	Daemonologie : ‡b in forme of a dialogue : diuided into three bookes / ‡c <i>James Rx.</i>	Daemonologie : ‡b in forme of a dialogue : diuided into three bookes.
500 __		"To the reader" signed, p. 9: <i>James Rx.</i> , i.e. James I.

A second significant difference concerns the issue of transcription. In many respects, RDA and DCRM principles for transcription are similar. In both, letters are generally transcribed as they appear, capitalization is normalized, and abbreviations are used only if found on the source. DCRM, however, provides much finer guidance on issues commonly found within rare materials, such as normalization of early letterforms (especially I/J and U/V) and treatment of symbols and spacing.

The imprint from the earlier *Daemonologie* example exemplifies the difference in treatment of transcription for the early letterforms u and v. In converting the “V” of “EDINBVRGH” to lowercase, DCRM instructs us to follow the pattern of usage in the text, in which the letterform “u” is used in this context. RDA, however, has us convert the uppercase “V” to a lowercase “v”.

	RDA	DCRM(B) applied with AACR2
264 _1	Edinbvrgh : ‡b Printed by Robert Walde-graue printer to the Kings Majestie, ‡c an. 1597.	Edinburgh : ‡b Printed by Robert Walde-graue, printer to the Kings Majestie, ‡c an. 1597.

Guidelines for transcription of punctuation have proven tricky. The task force feels that RDA’s guidelines on transcription of punctuation are inconsistently principled. When the RDA guidelines are applied and combined with ISBD punctuation -- as is still common -- punctuation in transcribed elements serves as an unreliable aid to representation of the resource. The draft of the RBMS Policy Statements permits normalization of punctuation, as needed; this approach is in the spirit of an alternative that RDA introduced in a 2016 update.

DCRM and RDA deal with misprints quite differently. As with AACR2, DCRM guidelines say to follow an inaccuracy “either by ‘[sic]’ or by the abbreviation ‘i.e.’ and the correction within square brackets.”³ In RDA, the misprint is not corrected or acknowledged within the transcribed element itself. The cataloger does *not* insert an interpolation. Instead, corrections can be made in related notes. If the misprint affects title information, the cataloger makes a variant title for the corrected form.

³ *Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books)*, 0G7.

RDA	DCRM
by John L. Dalderston	by John L. Dalderston [i.e. Balderston]

In older material, such inaccuracies and variant spellings occur more frequently. The task force is currently divided on whether our users are better served by the RDA approach or the existing DCRM approach. Both attempt to serve the principle of representation. In DCRM, the “[sic]” or “[i.e.]” introduces an interpolation, which is generally undesirable, but it serves to alert the user that this is really how the information appears on the source. RDA’s approach succeeds in leaving the transcribed text free of interpolations; but for users to be certain that the inaccuracy is not the fault of the cataloger, they must locate related information in a separate data element, and such data may not be prominent.

In DCRM, there are numerous guidelines that instruct the cataloger to make a note on transposition when information on the title page appears in an order that differs from the norm (which is to say, in ISBD order). RDA is mostly indifferent to the order of data elements, so the concept of transposition is almost entirely absent, and completely so for attributes concerning Manifestations and Items. That said, making notes on transposition does not violate any RDA principles.

Any discussion of differences between RDA and DCRM would be remiss without a consideration of pagination and foliation statements. One of the most controversial changes introduced by RDA is the new form of syntax for recording extent in resources issued as volumes. RDA has abandoned the system of using square brackets to record unnumbered pages, etc. Instead, RDA uses a verbose system for making distinctions between numbered and unnumbered pages.

RDA	DCRM
12 unnumbered pages, 275 pages, 1 unnumbered page, 1 unnumbered leaf of plates, XII leaves of plates	[12], 275, [1] p., [1], XII leaves of plates

The DCRM Task Force is confident that the earlier practice, which is also used internationally by bibliographers and the antiquarian book trade, better serves the needs of our community -- that is, for those who require such information to identify a resource.

Next Steps

The task force’s goal is to complete an initial version of the RBMS Policy Statements by June 2017. At that point, the work will be reviewed by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee and by the American Library Association’s Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access. We will solicit review from format specialist communities, such as the Music Library Association (MLA), the Map and Geospatial Information Round Table (MAGIRT), and the Cooperative Serials Program of the PCC (CONSER). We hope that we may also count on input from the international community of rare materials catalogers. There will also be a degree of review by the RSC, to ensure that the guidelines are in harmony with the principles of RDA. Additionally, we expect that descriptions made in accordance with our forthcoming policy statements will be flagged with a code in the descriptive conventions field (in MARC field 040, subfield e).

The task force will be disbanded after it publishes the first version of the RBMS Policy Statements. At that time, the guidelines will be maintained and enhanced by the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee. In the long term, we may wish to explore the benefits of broader international collaboration in development of cataloging guidelines for rare materials. Working together on a common standard may present logistical challenges -- not least of which, the need for multilingual implementation -- but the benefits are potentially immense. Our course of action should be made with users in mind. Researchers today may now easily consult online catalogs across the world; we render a service to such users when we describe an item in a consistent manner. If consistency is a worthwhile goal, then perhaps we should aim to have a standard for rare materials description that is at least as widely adopted as RDA itself.

References

Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Books). Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 2011. <http://rbms.info/dcrm/dcrmb/DCRMB3.pdf>.

RDA Steering Committee. "Resource Description & Access Toolkit." Accessed May 24, 2016. <http://www.rdatoolkit.org/>.

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