

TO: Qiang Jin, Chair, ALA/ALCTS/Cataloging and Classification Section (CCS)
CC: Shelby Harken, Incoming Chair, ALA/ALCTS/Cataloging and Classification Section (CCS)
FROM: John Myers, Chair, ALA/ALCTS/CCS/Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA)
RE: Feedback on LC's draft "Procedural Guidelines for Proposed New or Revised Romanization Tables"

OVERVIEW

CC:DA supports the development of these procedural guidelines and largely supports the draft guidelines as formulated. It does have some concerns with respect to internal division of labor within ALA and with some specifics of the interaction between ALA and LC over the course of developing future romanization tables.

BACKGROUND

Through 2009 and 2010, LC worked to revise the romanization table(s) for Greek. As efforts progressed, several issues became apparent regarding the coordination of efforts with ALA for approval of the revised table(s), in keeping with the practice of issuing joint ALA-LC tables. Consequently, LC issued the draft "Procedural Guidelines" on June 15, 2010 with a deadline for feedback of July 19, 2010.

DISCUSSION

CC:DA is pleased to see development of documentation that clarifies the process for development and approval of future romanization tables.

With respect to division of labor within ALA, the draft document refers to "the appropriate committee within the American Library Association" in Process paragraph 3. In Process paragraph 5, the committees are identified as CC:AAM for languages of Africa and Asia and CC:DA for other parts of the world. CC:DA identified some gray areas where a language was based in Europe but employed an Asiatic script or a language was based in Africa but employed a European script. Further discussion at the June 26 CC:DA meeting indicated that CC:AAM would essentially address any and all scripts and languages with an Asian or African context. CC:DA accepts this division of labor, contingent upon CC:AAM concurrence. Some fine tuning of the language in Process paragraph 5 may be warranted in order to make clarify that CC:AAM will be addressing not just languages but also scripts from Africa and Asia.

A larger concern for CC:DA was the role of ALA as laid out in Process section of the draft procedural guidelines. Since LC has a more centralized structure, there is merit to the central role of LC in the development of new tables. The finalized romanization tables are, however, a joint ALA-LC product. We therefore feel that ALA's role should be more co-equal. At present, ALA's input, beyond final approval, is on par with any other interested parties. Possible changes to enhance ALA's role could be as minor as preliminary notification that a proposal has been

received or is being internally developed by LC. This would give ALA sufficient early warning that preparations need to be made for the subsequent review process. On the far extreme, ALA could be invited to co-develop new draft tables. And this possibility raises the corollary of table development being initiated from ALA itself. CC:DA does not have any strong opinion as to which of these courses, or the range of possibilities between them, to follow. We anticipate that the likely course will be closer to the former rather than the latter, or may vary as circumstances warrant. The recent efforts with the romanization of Greek is the first within extant memory that CC:DA has undertaken. We therefore raise these questions but defer to the precedent and experiences of our colleagues on CC:AAM in resolving them in a finalized set of guidelines.