

Revised Procedural Guidelines for Proposed New or Revised Romanization Tables

I. Background

In order to help facilitate the approval process of new or revised Romanization tables, the Library of Congress (LC), the Committee on Cataloging: African and Asian Materials (CC:AAM), and the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) within the Cataloging and Classification Section of the American Library Association (ALA) have jointly developed the following guidelines to address Romanization issues. To make the review process as flexible and efficient as possible, LC, CC:AAM, and CC:DA are establishing a Review Board that will appoint Review Subcommittees that will be responsible for coordinating the review and approval of the Romanization table.

These guidelines apply to the creation of new tables and the revision of existing tables when needed and as applicable. Existing tables will not be explicitly revised to conform to these guidelines unless other major changes are warranted.

II. General Goals

- Any future ALA/LC Romanization Tables should be transliteration schemes rather than schemes to replicate pronunciation or guides to pronunciation. Pronunciation is variable around the world
- Any future ALA/LC Romanization Tables should enable machine-transliteration as much as possible and preferably reversible transliteration
- Any future ALA/LC Romanization Tables should be in line with internationally accepted standards and/or standards officially sanctioned by the home country when possible
- These goals may not always be met, but they should be applied on a case-by-case basis as best they can

III. Review Board

The Review Board consists of a group of seven members with three LC representatives and two representatives from CC:AAM and CC:DA of ALA, respectively. The LC representatives are standing members: ABA Director (or designee), PTCF chief (or designee), and ASME chief (or designee). ALA representatives serve on a rotation basis in conjunction with the terms they serve on the ALA committee. The Review Board is responsible for appointing the Review Subcommittee and designating a chair in charge of the review process within the Subcommittee.

IV. Review Subcommittee

The Review Subcommittee, appointed by the Review Board, is charged with reviewing and commenting on a specific Romanization table proposal submitted in an endeavor to work collaboratively with language and subject experts in the communities. The Review Subcommittee will be disbanded after the Review Board has reached the final outcome of the proposal and issued a status report. The Review Subcommittee may serve on a long term basis for certain languages. Multiple experts are needed for languages that have varying regional and local expression (e.g., Arabic, Persian, etc.) For languages spoken by smaller populations (e.g., Georgian, Karakalpak, etc.), the Review Board may go further afield

Last updated 2020-12-06

Commented [KS1]: It's great that this new draft includes most of the original "Procedural Guidelines for Proposed New or Revised Romanization Tables" contents (https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romguid_2010.html)

Commented [KS2]: A new section name under CORE?

Commented [KS3]: "Romanization tables" (plural) per Bob.

Commented [KS4]: The bullet points under this section could use the numbering rather than the simple bullet point in order for easy-referral?

Commented [KS5]: Since the main function of the Review Board is forming the Review Subcommittee (chair, members), I would suggest to entertain the idea of one each from CC:AAM and CC:DA (most likely the respective chair), and two others from other ALA sections such as ACRL or Acq/Tech/CORE/one International???

Commented [KS6]: What would be the relationship among this review subcommittee members, the experts in the communities, and especially the parson or the group submitted the proposal? Could they be overwrapped?

to acquire the necessary expertise to produce or revise Romanization tables that are accurate and useful. Members of the following organizations will be considered in forming the Review Subcommittee.

- [Africana Librarians Council](#) (ALC)
- [Association of Jewish Libraries](#) (AJL)
- [Committee on Technical Processing of Council on East Asian Libraries](#) (CEAL/CTP)
- [Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia](#) (CORMOSEA)
- [Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation](#) (CONSALD)
- [Middle East Librarians Association](#) (MELA)
- [ACRL European Studies Section Slavic Cataloging and Metadata Committee](#) (ESS-SCMC)
- [Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries](#) (ACRL/AAMES)
- [Consortium of Hellenic Studies Libraries](#)

V. Reviewing Guidelines

1. Examine national and international standards before beginning the process of creating a new or revising an existing Romanization table
2. Mapping characters to the Latin script
 - a. Prefer equivalent characters used from the MARC Basic Latin script repertoire as much as possible, but extended Latin characters may also be used
 - b. Choose a Latin script equivalent for a non-Latin letter, not necessarily based on pronunciation of the letter, but so as to maximize clarity and minimize confusion with the transliteration of other letters. The resulting Latin script equivalents should allow for the reversal of Romanization as systematically as possible, without the application of special algorithms or contextual tests
 - c. Use extended Latin alphabetic characters sparingly, if needed to support attested orthographic conventions
 - d. Include a table for numerals if the non-Latin script uses characters other than Western Arabic numerals
3. Modifiers
 - a. Prefer single letter equivalents (e.g., š) to blends (e.g., sh), that is, multiple letter equivalents, unless there is no ambiguity in the use of the blend
 - b. Use modifier characters (diacritical marks) in conjunction with the basic Latin script characters, but take care to avoid modifier characters that are not widely supported (e.g., ligature marks), or whose positioning over or under a Latin script base letter may interfere with the printing and/or display of that letter
 - c. Above. Prefer to use the acute (´), grave (`), hacek (ˇ), breve (˘), dieresis (¨), tilde (~), macron (¯), circumflex (ˆ), and dot above (˙), if needed
 - d. Below. Avoid modifiers below characters, since they often interfere with portions of Latin letters that descend and when underlining is present. If a modifier below is desired, prefer the dot below (·) or the cedilla (¸)

4. Render marks used as guides to pronunciation as diacritics or punctuation marks when necessary to accommodate pronunciation.
5. Non-alphabetic languages
 - a. In dealing with non-alphabetic scripts, e.g., syllabic scripts, ideographs, the above guidelines should be applied to the extent that they can be.
 - b. Any provisions for aggregation or word division should be based on such factors as international agreement, convenience of use, promotion of consistent application, and ease of online searching.
6. Other factors. The impact of file maintenance on legacy records should be considered in revising tables in relation to the ease or difficulty of accomplishing it, the benefits provided by the revisions, and the obligations of and impact on various organizations and institutions.

VI. Reviewing Procedures

1. Forwarding proposed new or revised Romanization tables:
 - a. Submit all draft tables (new and revised) to the Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division, Library of Congress, as an attachment to an electronic mail message sent to policy@loc.gov. The table is preferably in Microsoft Word, so that the file may be updated during the review process
 - b. Clearly note the proposed revisions either 1) within the table itself or 2) as a separate document indicating what the proposed revisions are and the justification for them.
 - c. Provide pertinent justification, e.g., experts consulted, sources consulted, international standards found.
2. Review Board appoints Review Subcommittee: Upon receiving the forwarded Romanization table proposal from LC, the Review Board will work with the organization with knowledge of the language and script listed in Section IV (Review Subcommittee), appoint, and form the Review Subcommittee within 30 days after receiving the proposal.
3. Review process by Review Subcommittee and other stakeholders: The timeline of the review process should be as flexible and efficient as possible. Review process should be simplified where there is community consensus on a table. The Review Board recommends between 30-60 days for the review period on a new or revised table. After reaching consensus within the Review Subcommittee, it will seek comments from the stakeholder community at large. This is done in several ways:
 - a. Posting the draft on the [Library of Congress Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access public website](#) with a request for comments within 30 days of the posting
 - b. Simultaneously, the draft will be sent to identified stakeholders with the same 30 days request for comment
 - c. The availability of the draft will be noted in a posting to various electronic lists according to the language. See list below
4. Receipt of comments: The request for comments will specify that such comments are to be sent to the email address of the Review Subcommittee Chair. The Subcommittee will evaluate the comments as they are received. Once the Subcommittee reaches consensus, it

will revise the draft table as appropriate. The Subcommittee will acknowledge the receipt of comments. The Subcommittee will have 30 days to complete this stage work from the beginning of the commenting deadline.

5. Approval process by Review Board: The Review Subcommittee will forward draft tables to the Review Board for approval. If the Review Board has comments or disagreements with the submitted draft table, it may be necessary to return to one of the steps above.
6. Issuing status report: The Review Board (via PTCP) will issue status reports to the stakeholders and electronic lists
7. Posting approved tables: PTCP will post the approved table on the Library of Congress Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access [ALA-LC Romanization Tables website](#).

Commented [KS7]: If the case of revision, what would happen the older tables? Can we archive somewhere?

VII. Electronic mail discussion lists

- Program for Cooperative Cataloging (pcc@listserv.loc.gov)
- Autocat (Autocat@listserv.syr.edu)
- [Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access](#) (CC:DA)
- [Committee on Cataloging: African and Asian Materials](#) (CC:AAM)
- Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) (hasafran@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu)
- Committee on East Asia Libraries (Eastlib@listserv.unc.edu)
- Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA) (cormosea@listserv.ohio.edu)
- Africana Librarians Council (alcalalist@lists.stanford.edu)
- Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) (melanet-1@googlegroups.com)
- Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation (CONSALD) (consald-@library.wisc.edu)
- Slavlib -- Slavic Librarian Forum (slavlib@mailman.yale.edu)
- [ACRL European Studies Section Slavic Cataloging and Metadata Committee](#) (ESS-SCMC)
- [Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies Interest Group](#) of ACRL (ACRL/AAMESIG)
- Consortium of Hellenic Studies Librarians (cohsl-list@lists.fas.harvard.edu)

Commented [KS8]: Some organizations miss their acronyms, such as PCC or CEAL. Those should be included to be consistent?