TO: Library of Congress, Policy and Standards Division

CC: Barbara Tillett, Chief, Cataloging Policy and Support Office

          Qiang Jin, Chair, ALA/ALCTS/Cataloging and Classification Section (CCS)

FROM: John Myers, Chair, ALA/ALCTS/CCS/Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA)

RE: Response to Revised romanization tables for Greek

OVERVIEW

CC:DA forwards the report of the CC:DA Task Force for the Review of the Proposed Romanization Tables (2009) for Ancient and Modern Greek, with its unqualified endorsement.

BACKGROUND

In the Summer 2009 issue of the Cataloging Service Bulletin, the Library of Congress published proposed tables, one each for the romanization of Ancient and Medieval Greek and of Modern Greek, to replace the current combined table. It requested feedback by December 31, 2009. In March, 2010, the Library of Congress re-iterated its request for feedback with and extended deadline. ALA-LC romanization tables are normally addressed by the Cataloging Committee: Asian and African Materials (CC:AAM), but Greek is outside their purview. CC:DA was designated as the appropriate body within ALA to formulate a response. CC:DA then authorized the formation of a task force with the charge of "reviewing the tables proposed by the Library of Congress and to return a timely report that will form the basis of an official ALA response." The membership of the task force was selected with an eye towards a variety of perspectives: with respect to expertise in Ancient and in Modern Greek, and with respect to experience in cataloging and in collection development.

DISCUSSION

CC:DA, to the extent that it is able to understand the relevant issues, is aware that the history of Greek orthography is lengthy and complex. Due to that complexity, it is unlikely that any romanization scheme will perfectly address the competing demands of a) absolute accuracy across long periods of time and b) consistency across the same. We have particular confidence in the recommendations of the Task Force but acknowledge that others may come to different solutions. We are open therefore to further discussion to address the differences between the initial tables proposed by the Library of Congress, the report of the Task Force, and the perspectives of other constituencies in the library community. We also acknowledge that, while a coherent, systematic approach to bring existing records in line with the new tables would be optimal, the availability and allocation of resources to achieve this end may be problematic and therefore also warrant further discussion.

TO: ALA/ALCTS/CCS/Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA)

FROM: ALA/ALCTS/CCS/CC:DA Task Force for the Review of the Proposed Romanization Tables (2009) for Ancient and Modern Greek

RE: Report of the Task Force

CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE
The Task Force for the Review of the Proposed Romanization Tables (2009) for Ancient and Modern Greek is charged with reviewing the tables proposed by the Library of Congress and to return a timely report that will form the basis of an official ALA response.

REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE
The Task Force has reviewed the Romanization Tables (2009) for Ancient (http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/greeka.pdf) and Modern Greek (http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/greekm.pdf) available on the Library of Congress web site.

1. The Task Force recommends acceptance of the concept of two separate romanization tables,
   a. one for Greek, Ancient and Medieval (before 1454), and
   b. the second for Greek, Modern (after 1453)

2. The Task Force recommends acceptance of the table for Greek, Ancient and Medieval (before 1454) as presented.

3. The Task Force recommends modifying the table for Greek, Modern (after 1453) so that there is only one romanization scheme, rather than separate schemes for polytonic and monotonic orthography.

   One romanization scheme may be accomplished by removing all the notes on polytonic orthography, monotonic orthography, and identification, and replacing them with:

   > All diacritical marks, such as the coronis, acute, circumflex, and grave accents, and the diaeresis, as well as the rough and smooth breathings, and iota subscript and adscript, are omitted in romanization

4. The Task Force recommends that the Library of Congress and OCLC work with those having large numbers of records in Modern Greek to effect a conversion of those records to remove the rough breathing from all post-1453 Modern Greek records.

If resources are not available at LC and OCLC for conversion of existing records in the near term, we should postpone implementation of any changes until such resources are available.

COMMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS:

For Modern Greek, recommendation 3 is equivalent to following monotonic orthography, no matter which orthography is used in the piece being cataloged. This recommendation introduces one more difference between Ancient/Medieval and Modern Greek romanization, in addition to the existing b vs. v difference. We believe this recommendation is practicable, will be easy to implement and will result in better searching for users.

We also believe that the conversion of existing Modern Greek records to conform with the new romanization table is essential so that there will be only two versions of Greek romanization in library catalogs: Ancient/Medieval and Modern, without any further variations within either. As part of the conversion, the associated authority work will need to be performed to adjust headings (we are not persuaded that a one-at-a-time approach is sufficient to meet user needs).

We also think it appropriate that the tables carry the date(s) of approval, revision, etc. in their presentation on the web.

Members of the Task Force:

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Princeton University Library

George Johnston
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