

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR

FROM: Sally Strutt, British Library representative

SUBJECT: Proposals to simplify AACR2 Ch. 21 special rules

The British Library welcomes the compilation of proposals from other constituencies. As we do not use the special rules in Chapter 21 in their entirety, we do not feel it appropriate to comment in detail on their simplification or otherwise. For the most part we will defer to the expert opinions on the specifics expressed from other constituencies.

In general, BL supports the simplification of rules wherever possible, although we recognise that “simplification” is not always as straightforward or simple as it may sound. We support the CILIP and CCC responses to the follow-up in their general observations and agree that there are training and documentation issues concerned with the generalisation of previously-existing rules which specific communities may have become used to. We also whole-heartedly support the CILIP comments relating to the various RDA-related products and the way those products may behave. We agree that consideration should be given to retaining some rules which, although technically and theoretically redundant, may need to be retained for the sake of completeness and user expectation.

BL cataloguers of printed musical works have expressed a preference for awaiting future drafts of RDA before commenting specifically on these rules. They have expressed support for some kind of “music view” of RDA, to be achieved by technical means if not by textual separation of rules relating to printed music. The ability to extract the rules relating only to the material you are cataloguing is an attractive one to specialist areas who are used to dealing only with “their” rules. However, they also see the benefits of directly relating rules specific to musical works with the general rules – to show that the special rules for music, for instance, are effectively musical illustrations of general rules. To demonstrate this connection with the fundamental rules for all material will help in training.

In terms of presentation, if special rules are to be moved to a place within the general rules then we favour clearly defined boxes outlining the special rules so that they are easy to find both on page and screen.