

Handbook for AACR2: 'a curate's egg'

HANDBOOK FOR AACR2: EXPLAINING AND ILLUSTRATING ANGLO-AMERICAN CATALOGUING RULES 2nd ed / Margaret F. Maxwell. Chicago: American Library Association. 1980. 463pp. ISBN 0 8389 0301 0. No price given.

This *Handbook* grew from the author's experience in teaching cataloguing to students at the Graduate School of Librarianship in the University of Arizona. Its declared aim is 'to assist library school students and cataloguers in the application of the most commonly used rules for description, choice of access points, and form of heading ... used in AACR2.'

The need for the work is justified by the assertion that the examples in AACR2 though frequent, are not in full catalogue entry format; for example, those illustrating the rules governing the edition statement give only that area of the description and do not show it in the context of the complete entry.

Library school students and inexperienced cataloguers, it is said, 'often find these examples mystifying in their brevity'. The experience of the staff teaching cataloguing at RMIT supports this claim, at least in so far as it relates to students, and complete examples are welcome. Moreover, the provision with the examples of a transcription of the title page (or other chief source of information) together with other relevant prescribed sources, also offers something of value which is missing from AACR2.

The examples are clear, usually simple and in general straightforward. The examples in Chapter 24 (Form of name for corporate bodies) seems especially apposite. The commentary varies in detail but is generally helpful. At times the explanation is particularly good, for example the discussion page 229 of the rule regarding holdings information for serials.

The *Handbook* follows the order of the rules of AACR2. Most rules are illustrated by an example which includes a transcription of the chief source of information and a full, level three, catalogue entry. The majority of the examples used to illustrate the rules in Chapter 1 of AACR2 (the most extensive chapter in the *Handbook*) and the rules in Part II of the code, are books. This deliberate choice is justified by the author on the grounds that inexperienced cataloguers are better acquainted with books than with non-book materials and that examples based on monographs provide, therefore, a more comfortable frame of reference.

Examples of the various forms of non-book material are, of course, used in the chapters of the *Handbook* dealing with the corresponding chapter in AACR2; however, it would have been more in keeping with

the spirit of the code if the chapter dealing with the general rules on description had been less heavily biased towards monographs. Furthermore, precisely because most inexperienced cataloguers (and, one might add, not a few experienced cataloguers) are less familiar with non-book materials than with print materials, the chapters dealing with non-book materials would have been improved by more detailed discussion and more examples. This is especially true of the quite inadequate discussion (three lines) of the note area in the chapter on microforms.

A more serious criticism is that some of the comment and examples are open to question and appear to reflect interpretations of AACR2 which are idiosyncratic or even mistaken. For example, a series statement which reads: '(Everyman's library; no. 777. For young people)' appears to this reviewer to be questionable; the statement 'For young people' should appear as a note since this does not appear to be a statement of a sub-series. At the very least, in a work intended for students, there should have been some explanation of the decision to include it as part of the series statement.

The statement in the second paragraph of page 71, in the context of general rules, that '...few items include a specific statement of publication date' seems astonishing unless it is meant to refer to non-book materials. Again, on the same page there appears the comment that '...sometimes the cataloguer knows that the date on the title page or other chief source of information is that of a re-issue of a particular edition, ie, not the actual date of publication. In this case make a correction.' The accompanying example shows an item with an edition date of 1958 and several reprints, the last one being in 1970; the entry gives the date as '1958 (1970 printing)'.

However, Rule 1.4F3 states: 'Give the date of a particular re-issue of an edition

as the date of publication only if the re-issue is specified in the edition area ... In this case give only the date of the re-issue'. In the example the edition area does not specify any re-issue, which is correct since a reading of the glossary confirms that a mere reprint does not constitute a re-issue. The example does not illustrate the point at issue, and if it did the entry is incorrect. There are similar slips elsewhere, for instance on page 125 a tracing appears for a corporate body which is not mentioned anywhere in the entry — a contravention of Rule 21.29F.

Some of the guidance in the *Handbook* seems to be a variance with a strict interpretation of the rules. For example, on page 30 advice is given about transcribing statements of responsibility which appear elsewhere than in the chief source of information. 'The cataloguer should exercise judgement about whether to include "prominent" information not appearing in the chief source of information as part of the statement of responsibility. Transcribe it only if it is significant; ie, of such nature that an added entry will be based on the information.' There is no warrant for this in the code which tells us to: 'Record statements of responsibility appearing prominently in the item in the form in which they appear there' (1.1F1) and 'Transcribe a statement of responsibility even if no person or body is named in that statement' (1.1F14).

The *Handbook* is an ambitious undertaking, and it is no mean achievement on Ms Maxwell's part to have produced it so promptly. It contains, as may be deduced, a wealth of examples, and teachers of cataloguing will find useful for that purpose if for no other. It could have been much more, but unfortunately it is, like the curate's egg, good in parts. One's conclusion has to be that we still await an authoritative sampler for AACR2.

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ARTIST VOYAGERS TO AUSTRALIA

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY of Australia has published its 1982 engagement calendar — *Artist Voyagers to Australia*. There are 54 plates (some in colour) showing the pictorial records of early Australia created by artists who never lived in this country but who came here on voyages of discovery and exploration.

The calendar reproduces examples of such work from the collections of the National Library—in some cases from original paintings, drawings and illustrated manuscripts, in others, from the published accounts of voyages.

Artist Voyagers to Australia 1982 Engagement Calendar is available from the Sales and Subscription Unit, National Library of Australia, price \$8.50.

One of the illustrations appearing in the Calendar is *Banksia coccinea*, a copper engraving from Ferdinand Bauer's *Florae Novae Hollandiae* (1813), recording species gathered during the voyage of the *Investigator*, 1801-3, and later. Bauer (1760-1826) is one of the finest natural history artists to have treated Australian subjects.

