based on the Bliss principles that will best serve their own needs. As the authors warn, "never classify solely from the A/Z index; always check in the classified schedule". This means that no simple-minded classing of documents on the basis of this volume is possible; before starting to class documents in a library, users will have to make an analysis of the goals of their own collection, its anticipated users, and the kinds of choices that will be most useful to meet their needs.

Fred W.Riggs

Prof.Dr.F.W.Riggs, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI, 96822, USA.

LEHNUS, Donald J.: **Book Nu**mbers. History, Principles and Applications. Chicago: American Library Association 1980. IV,153p., ISBN 0-8389-0316-9.

COMAROMI, John P.: **Book Nu**mbers. A Historical Study and Practical Guide to their Use. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited 1981. 145p., ISBN 0-87287-251-3

The publication of two full volumed studies on book numbers following close upon each other's heels is somewhat inexplicable. Their appearance, though sudden, is, however, as highly welcome as well-timed rains in the desert. Classification textbook writers seem to be busy wiping out the last vestiges of book numbers from the new editions of their books. For the new generation of researchers in classification, this topic seems suited to their forefathers alone. It no longer seems to hold the attention and interest of scholars. This subject is well past its heyday. Literature on it is vanishing. Consequently, during the past three or four decades, there has been neither research nor any important writing on it. Earlier, only two small pamphlets on book numbers appeared in 1917 and 1937 (1-2). This is indeed an endangered species! Hence, these two books on a subject which is very rarely treated deserve applause. Regretfully, these two books did not attract many reviews, far less any stirrings in library literature. This further confirms lack of interest in the subject, or the reaching of the saturation point. If it is so, it belongs to those very few topics which attain a state of saturation.

Book numbers are a means of classification within classification. Book numbers subarrange all those documents which have the same ultimate class numbers. Book numbers are necessary to provide unique call numbers to the library documents for discrete arrangement on the shelves. They are equally indispensable for shelf-listing and for a classified catalogue. Also known as external notation as distinguished from the internal notation of the class number, a book number is essentially based on some non-subject (external) characteristics of the document, as the subject (or internal) characteristics have already been exhausted while assigning the class number to the document. Hence, book numbers are a step beyond (subject) classification. A class number and a book number are two different steps in the same line to a common end. In other words, the function of a book number starts where that of a class number ends.

Book numbers are an adjunct in library classification as these are not required in knowledge classification. Further, these are only required in a relative classification as distinguished from the fixed location systems of pre-Dewey days. In relative classification, too, these are considered as an auxiliary. In the beginning there was a debate on their usefulness which has now been happily settled in their favor. However, an erroneous notion has come into circulation that the more minute a classification is, the less book numbers are used. It is a highly exaggerated side fact. According to Lehnus (p.75): "If there are only a few items with the same classification number, the book number can be simple, but if the library has many items classified under one number then it must be more detailed". Lehnus' argument in essence boils down to the old argument that if the library is small the classification may be broader, but classification has of necessity to be minute when the size of the library goes on increasing. However, Comaromi (p.5) is apt to say that to pay scant attention to book numbers "is to leave the frosting off the cake. The cake can be eaten to be sure, but with less ease and appreciation". Without book numbers there will be mini-pockets of chaos under every class number and the cost of retrieving a document will be burdensome and even frustrating (Comaromi, p.52).

Ineluctably, the origin and development of book numbers is coeval with the development of relative classification begun in 1876. "At the Amherst, Dewey tried placing the author's name in full or abbreviated form after the class number, but found the method unwieldy. He then decided to use the simplest method possible, that of numbering each book in a class according to its accession. Thus 160.11 would be the first work on logic, 160.2 the second" informs J.Comaromi elsewhere (3). This accession order subarrangement resulted in more or less chronological order within the same class. Then came the idea of translating the author's name into numbers. A prototype, actually a part of his "combined system" of classification, was devised in 1878 by M.Jacob Schwartz (1846-1926) the then librarian of the New York Apprentices Library. His system subarranged books first by size then by author number. Charles Ammi Cutter (1837-1903) liked Schwartz's idea better than the Dewey method of arranging by accession number. John Endmands (1820-1913), librarian of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia from 1856-1901, successfully improved upon Schwartz's method by prefixing the initial letter to the number standing for the author's name. Cutter at first objected to the mixing of alphabet and numerals but later found it useful. C.A.Cutter, of course, struck by Dewey's use of decimal notations, improved them further by treating the numerals as decimal digits, thus making way for the infinite intercalation of names where needed. In its February 1879 issue, the Library Journal published a symposium on book numbers to which many leading librarians contributed. It gave a fillip to the theory and practice of book numbers. Many ensuing innovative ideas charged the atmosphere further. Cutter was also the first to publish and sell a self-devised author table in 1880 from Boston which is now no longer exstant. In 1885, W.S.Biscoe, a lieutenant of Melvil Dewey, proposed a new system of book numbers based upon the year of publication of the books. Dewey commended it as useful for science and technology books and also included it in his Decimal Classification. By the end of the 1880's cuttering had become a standard procedure; and now "cutter" is an

accepted word in the repertoire of the English language, though the book numbering methods are many more.

These two books on book numbers, as their titles and subtitles indicate, cover almost the same ground. The late Donald J.Lehnus (1934-1983) is the first "modern" writer on the subject. His study is both scholarly and pragmatic - dwelling equally, with a calculated balance, on the history, theory, and application of book numbers. This book sans a preface plunges headlong into the problem of definition and the use of the term "book number". Lehnus does not forget to enumerate the various ingenious uses the enterprising librarians have put book numbers to. The book has been broadly divided into two parts followed by two appendices. The first appencix is a bibliography of - in all - ten versions of Cutter Tables published from 1880 to 1969. The second appendix is small, an illustrated "substitute for a Cutter author table". These appendices are followed by a rare, but succinct bibliography of 67 items on the subject arranged chronologically from 1876 to 1978. This bibliography is confined to American works in English most of which appeared in the early issues of the Library Journal. There are three foreign language works, two of them by Lehnus in Spanish. This bibliography is by no means complete, not even as far as English language works are concerned. Many original contributors such as James Duff Brown, S.R. Ranganathan, and Fremont A.Rider are conspicuous by their absence. This however, is the largest bibliography on book numbers ever compiled.

There are eleven chapters in all, punctuated by nine different tables -the study is fully illustrated. Part 1, consisting of three chapters, is devoted to the problem of the definition, origin, and development of book numbers, especially the Cutter author tables. The history is very detailed and intimate up to the 1880's, the time in which Cutter numbers became well entrenched library practice. Lehnus' source has mostly been the early issues of the Library Journal. Chapter 3 is devoted exclusively to the Cutter tables as presented in the Cutter two-figure author table, the Cutter three-figure author table, the Cutter-Sanborn three figure author table, and their Swanson-Swift revisions as published in 1969 (by Libraries Unlimited, Littleton, USA). It is an irony of life that C.A.Cutter tried to supercede and forget the Cutter-Sanborn version of his author table and to discredit Miss Kate Emery Sanborn (later Mrs.Jones) for the excellent work she had done, and that this is the most living (if not only living) work associated with Cutter's name. These historical chapters, quoting in full some of the founders and pioneers, are full of human interest; and throw a side light on some aspects of Cutter's personality. Explicating the mechanism of constructing author tables, it illustrates that the mechanism of the distribution of decimal notation to names is not arbitrary. It is proportionate and depends upon the distribution of names according to initial letters. This study itself poses many searching questions and tries to find answers. Even though the cuttering picture may be complete, that of the book numbers falls far short of this. Many more systems of book numbers, e.g., that of W.S. Biscoe, James Duff Brown, S.R.Ranganathan, W.S.Merrill and Fremont Rider, to name only the prominent, have not been mentioned. It is not known why the history has not been brought uptodate. Part 2, consisting of eight chapters (4-11), is entitled "Guidelines and principles of assigning book numbers"; and dwells upon the practicalities of the subject and its application in different situations. The fourth chapter tenders general tips for assigning book numbers; and the next two chapters (5-6) deal respectively with work marks and the problem of placing together the host and the associated books such as adaptations, translations, commentaries and the like. The remaining chapters deal with the book numbering problems of documents in various forms such as biographies, classics, anonymous works, and many more. Some of the details seem too commonplace to be described academically. In fact there are far more locally devised methods than ever described in the literature. However, the use of these chapters may introduce some uniformity in a jungle of diversity.

Comaromi's book, the latest book on the subject, is, incidentally, the first critical study of book numbers from a commercial publisher. One aim is to suggest "under what conditions particular methods are advisable" (p.5). Besides a one page preface, the book comprises eight chapters followed by five appendices on Cutter tables which enhance the historical value of what is essentially a "how-to-do-it" book. Ample illustrations, figures and scholarly notes are an outstanding feature of the book. Hence its subtitle, "A historical study and practical guide", is too apt. The first three chapters define book numbers in the broader perspective of classification, and illustrate their need and purpose. Chapter two is on the nature of relative classification - which only needs book numbers. The illustrated chapter three is devoted to accession register and the shelf lists (both are non-public catalogues). Chapter four is entirely devoted to the history of book numbers and discusses in chronological order the contributions to book number theory and practice by Melvil Dewey, M.Jacob Schwartz, Charles Ammi Cutter, A.P. Massey, W.S. Biscoe and the discussions that appeared from time to time in the early years (1870's) of the Library Journal. It depicts the subject in its birth travails. The historical treatment is brief, simple and perspicuous, but is not carried to its end. Chapter five illustrates with figures the advantages of using author numbers over the author's name written as such. The sixth chapter comes to the practical details of Cutter-Sanborn three-figure tables as applied with the DDC. Chapter seven explicates Bertha Barden's cuttering rules for writers with a large literary warrant. Chapter eight is the key and the crowning chapter. It dwells upon the book numbering procedure of the Library of Congress. Since Anna C. Laws (1917) (1) and two other studies (4-5), nothing has been available on the shelf-listing practices of this great institution whose classification is widely followed in other libraries in USA and outside. In LC classification the book number notation is often a part of the class number. The book is amply illustrated and documented. Arguments are cogent. The historian in John Comaromi never forgets to draw lessons from events. His moralising habit makes a dreary and so practical subject quite lucid.

Incidentally, to some extent these two books cover and neglect the same topics. Lehnus' central emphasis on the Cutter system is counterbalanced by Comaromi's corresponding emphasis on LC practices. However, unfortunately neither of these two books studies and explains the book numbering systems developed outside

the USA. Even that is not complete as chronological book numbering systems have not been studied, except that of W.S.Biscoe and that too cursorily. Ranganathan's system of book numbers gets no more treatment than a passing mention by Comaromi. Lehnus perhaps had no knowledge of the existence of Ranganathan's system. It is a pity that such a highly developed, sophisticated, and universally applicable system has remained in abeyance. However, this void in literature is being filled (6). Nevertheless Lehnus and Comaromi have tried to revive a long neglected topic from libo and have given an academic face-lift to the subject and have underlined their deserved importance. We, for our part, in addition to reviving interest, are yet to ponder on the form and roles in store for book numbers in the Lancasterian era of paperless libraries when the book itself along with the "shelf" will vanish.

Mohinder Partap Satija

Department of Library and Information Science,
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar-143005, India

Note:

1 It may be reminded that in the first edition of the DDC no class number consisted of more than three digits; and the standard subdivisions were also not used then.

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Obituary

In memoriam Prof. Alwin Diemer

On Christmas Day 1986 Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil. Alwin Diemer, the co-publisher of this journal, died at the age of 67. Although he had been ill for a long time, his death nevertheless came unexpectedly.

Born in 1920 in the Palatinate town of Eisenberg, (West) Germany, A. Diemer started studying philosophy shortly before the outbreak of World War II, soon to switch to human medicine after having come into conflict with the spirit of the age then reigning in Germany. After the end of the war he took his state medical degree at Heidelberg University and went on to obtain in 1947 the degree of a Doctor of Medicine on a thesis "On the Problem of Blood Catabolism". Turning then again to philosophy, Diemer became of Doctor of Philosophy at Mainz, Germany, in 1950 on a thesis "On the Problem of the Unconscious in its Historical Development", to habilitate 4 years later in philosophy at the same university through a thesis on Husserl. There followed years of fertile publishing activity and teaching as a university lecturer and extraordinary professor, likewise at Mainz. In 1963 Diemer received a call to Düsseldorf, where he was named full professor and director of the Institute of Philosophy, which he headed until his retirement in 1985. Intermittently he was Dean of his department as well as President of Düsseldorf University from 1968 to 1970.

Diemer's devoted efforts and personal engagement in building up his institute library – now a favorite rallying point for guest researchers from all over the world – as well as, in connection therewith, the designing of a subtle systematic catalog for this library and, last not least, the idea of documentation of journal articles realized as of 1967 as one of the very first computerized documentation projects in the field of the humanities, brought him into contact with the institutionalized I & D field and induced him to play a n active part there, too. Thus he served as a Council member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation (DGD = German Documentation Society) from 1969 to 1972 and went on to serve on its praesidium from 1972 to 1975. From 1967 to 1974 he headed the DGD Committee for Classification and Thesaurus Research (DGD-KTF).

But more so than the documentation practice at his Institute and his preoccupation, necessitated by it, with the theoretical and methodological preconditions of documentation it was Diemer's fundamental philosophical orientation which explains his profound interest in concept-theoretical and order-theoretical problems, an interest even extending to information-scientific problems in general.

Alwin Diemer never ceased to invoke, on the one hand, Aristotle and, on the other hand, Socrates as godfathers of his work. To him, Aristotle was the prime example of encyclopaedic thinking, a way of thinking