the system, taking into consideration the further developments and improvements made since the first edition in 1974. There can be no doubt that Austin's "Manual" will be the standard work for the use of PRECIS in the English language for a long time to come. For other languages, special studies exist in which the respectively necessary additions or modifications of the codings are described. As, however, not only the principles of working out a thesaurus, but also the basic linguistic structures of the PRECIS syntax have general validity, the reading of this manual should have priority wherever the application of PRECIS is intended. Reading it does, however, make great demands on the reader and presupposes knowledge of the theory of indexing, in particular of verbal subject analysis. As a preliminary introduction to PRECIS, such texts should, therefore, be recommended which, leaving out the details, restrict themselves to the presentation of the main features and essential peculiarities of the system and which have been published in German[6].

Helmut Beck

Notes:

1 We are very grateful to the Editor-in-Chief for permission to translate and publish this review which appeared in German in Zbl.Bibl.wes. 101 (1987)No.7, p.324-326

2 In an earlier publication, I gave a detailed account of the workings of PRECIS, for which reason I can refrain from further explanations in the frame of this book review. (Beck, H.: PRECIS - A method of computer-aided verbal subject analysis on a linguistic basis. Zbl.Bibl.wes. 100(1986)Nos.6 and 8, pp.264-267; 333-339)

3 In this second edition, we are given an amended edition of the first edition of the "Manual" - which leads to the conclusion that coping with this problem also caused PRECIS particular difficulties.

4 It was originally intended as a textbook for students, but this conception could not be reconciled with the aims of a comprehensive manual. In the meanwhile, a special primer for teaching purposes has appeared in English: Dykstra, M.: PRECIS: A primer. London: The British Library 1985; also a workbook: Ramsden, M.J.: PRECIS: a workbook for students of librarianship. London: Bingley 1981. (Outlines of Modern Librarianship)

5 Reading is facilitated by the fact that the comments appear as genuine footnotes on the respective pages, a typographic practice agreeable to the reader, but which, unfortunately, would seem to have gone out of fashion.

6 Cf.comments to bibliographic references in the paper quoted under footnote 1, on p.339.

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DYKSTRA, Mary: **PRECIS: A Primer.** London: The British Library Bibliographic Services Division 1985. VIII,270p., ISBN 0-7123-1022-3

Ever since the British Library adopted PRECIS for creating the subject index of the *British National Bibliography*, the development of the Preserved Context Index System has been a success story. The system has been acclaimed and accepted in numerous countries throughout the world. Derek Austin, who developed PRECIS, first published a comprenesive manual in 1974 and a revised edition in 1984. With more and more people working with PRECIS, the need for teaching material arose. Several textbooks on PRECIS were published, for instance M.J.Ramsden's *PRECIS: A workbook for students* (London 1981), or Ph.A.Richmond's *Introduction to PRECIS for North American Usage* (Littleton 1981). The approach of the present textbook is different. Having assisted Austin in the preparation of the second edition of the manual, Mary Dykstra took the opportunity to publish what she called a *primer*, strictly based on the manual and intended to serve as an introductory course for beginners who might be put off by the sheer weight of the linguistic, computational and thesaural framework of PRECIS rules (and exceptions) amply documented in the manual itself.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* neatly defines *primer* as an "elementary schoolbook for teaching children to read" or a "small introductory book". Background, scope as well as intended audience of the primer are plainly and carefully stated. Ms.Dykstra, Associate Professor at the School of Library Service, Dalhousie University (Canada), herself suggests that the manual and the primer may be used in a complementary way (the manual for teachers and the primer for the students). Although resembling the manual in many ways (arrangement and presentation of contents, layout), the present book may not necessarily be considered a kind of off-shoot of the manual. Yet crucial questions remain. Is the primer a shortened and simplified version of the manual, limited to the most important features usually applied in the indexing process? Does it merely give an idea of what PRECIS is all about, or will the student, having completed the primer, be able to work with the system? Is there any didactic approach in the primer, more didactic than the manual can understandably be? Such an approach will certainly be expected, particularly since the author has been teaching PRECIS for 10 years.

The primer divides into 16 chapters, which follow the path set out by the manual. The introductory chapters 1-6 follow the manual quite closely, both in content and in length. Incidentally, Prof.Dykstra, very much like Dr.Austin, finds it easier to say what PRECIS is *not*, rather than what it actually *is*. The primer then goes on to describe string writing codes and conventions, differencing, dependent elements and coordinate concepts. However, it is more concise (and straightforward in didactic terms) when it comes to the description of primary operators (location; key system: object of transitive action, or performer of intransitive action; action; agent: performer of transitive action; viewpoint-as-form; selected instance; form of document). As expected from a textbook, it plainly states the PRECIS rules, describes the application of the important features, including, of course, secondary operatory and the various codes, and provides numerous and telling examples. It is, perhaps, less explanatory and argumentative than the manual, to which the inquisitive student will frequently have to turn for more background information.

More regrettably, the primer provides only a heavily abbreviated version of the manual s account on thesaurus construction. Where the manual takes about 80 pages to deal extensively with several aspects of thesaurus construction (basic relationships, components of input records, building the "Penguin" network, extra codes and procedures), the primer displays only the basic relationships in more detail and sums up the remaining three chapters in 15 pages, thus reducing the content to about a third. The very lucid analysis of thesaurus

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aspects that alone would make the manual essential reading for anyone involved in terminology control is only insufficiently conveyed into the primer. This might lead students to appreciate only one half of the PRECIS virtues, content analysis and creation of indexing strings, while neglecting the other half, almost as important, devising a network of indexing terminology. There are essential chapters on "Coding for computer manipulation" and "Managing PRECIS input and retrieval". Most chapters are concluded with exercises, answers to which are provided in an appendix (again, this follows the manual). As for abridgments, it seems quite understandable that the comprehensive algorithms for entry construction and validation checks are omitted in the primer.

Extending the scope of the manual, the primer has a short chapter on PRECIS in an online environment. The prime objective of PRECIS has always been the creation of printed indexes. Yet the proliferation of databases, notable BLAISELINE (the online service of the British Library), calls for a consideration of how to use PRECIS in the new situation of post-coordinate search. Here the PRECIS terms are being used as keywords, and the system, employing the Boolean operators, displays all PRECIS strings in which the sought combination of terms occurs. These strings (i.e. the complete verbal features, including syntactic and semantic features such as prepositions, as known, for instance, from the *British National Bibliography*) are displayed before the titles, so that a search may be specified and irrelevant strings (and, consequently, irrelevant titles) be excluded.

The primer certainly serves as a straightforward introduction to beginners, providing them not only with a description of PRECIS (as other textbooks do, such as A.C.Foskett's *Subject Approach to Information*), but with a working knowledge of the system. One serious problem remains, though: the price. The primer's layout is quite odd, the type area covers only about 80% per page. Therefore, the primer boils down to a slim book of just over 200 pages. The valuable examples and the easy-to-follow course of the primer notwithstanding, the manual remains indispensable for more detailed study of PRECIS. At current prices of £ 8.95 and £ 7.95 (!) for primer and manual respectively, the complete manual may seem a better long-term investment all the same.

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WYNAR, Bohdan S.: **Introduction to Cataloging and Classification. 7th ed.** Edited by Arlene G.Taylor. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited 1985. 657p., ISBN 0-87287-512-1 (cloth), -480-0 (paper)

The seven editions of this work (1964, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1976, 1980, 1985) form an interesting history in its gradual incorporation of collaboration: the 5th (1976) was revised in association with the late Dr.J.P. Immroth; the 6th was revised by Arlene Taylor Dowell and Jeanne Osborn, and incorporated suggestions invited from a wide range of U S teachers. This policy has been carried a step further in the 7th ed.: its reviser, Arlene Taylor, has included treatment of newer aspects of classification by Prof. Hans Wellisch. Such associations of noted U S experts testifies to the work's status in the field.

This is a text designed to meet the needs of students as well as practitioners, both in terms of descriptive and of subject cataloguing. Through its seven-edition history it has always kept pace with developments. The only negative aspect has been its progressive obesity (ed. 1-6); in the 7th ed. this tendency has been slightly checked (its paperback version especially shows this, and is a boon to students): a welcome trend, if continued. The legibility and durability of this edition are excellent: it is a book inviting to hold and to read.

Both, bibliographical description and subject representation are dealt with, the latter both in terms of classification systems and subject headings. The descriptive cataloguing part consists of (I) chapters 1-2 on the history of AACR, and (II) chapters 3-14 on description of book and nonbook materials as per the various ISBDs. Illustrations are useful because they deal with typical problems, and the AACR2 rules are summarized throughout. Problems are explained and discussed, not merely referred to the rules by quotation. The subject cataloguing part (III) consists of chapter 15 on subject analysis (a feature new in this edition): it heralds the whole section and sets the tone, which can be called "comparative"; chapters 16-20 are on traditional schemes of classification. The rest (chapters 21-24) are on subject headings and subject indexing, both traditional and computerized. NEPHIS (NEsted PHrase Indexing System), designed by T.C. Craven in 1977, is one newly described system, but such Indian systems as chain indexing and POPSI are ignored, notwithstanding the historical position of the former: such omission is atrocious. Among the classification schemes the American ones, DDC and LCC, are (expectedly) fully elaborated; UDC and Bliss (or rather Mills's BC2) are only described in brief; and some dated schemes such as Brown's Subject Classification and Cutter's Expansive Classification have each a section. But (alas!) Ranganathan's Colon Classification has not been given any place, though there is a small section (pp 372-374) on the nature of the faceted classification. Has the CC become too dated or irrelevant? The omission only reflects and confirms the impression of American apathy toward the contribution of Ranganathan. This in spite of the 6th-ed. admission that

> A whole school of thought (has) developed from (Ranganathan's) basic concepts, and there has been growing interest, particularly in Europe, in adapting them to special "faceted" indexing schemes.

It is to be hoped that this error will be rectified in the next edition by restoration of the chapter on CC, which is still alive (its 7th ed. has been published in 1987), and which still has substance.

Administrative aspects of the subject area dealt with (IV) in chapters 25-27: filing rules (especially ALA 1980), centralized processing, and the management of online bibliographc networks. Problems are dealt with concisely and with insight. Over-all, the weights given to the various topics in this textbook mirror the U S library-school curricula.

Every chapter ends with a "Notes" section containing

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