

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of the Bibliographic Classification may fairly be described as the life's work of Henry Evelyn Bliss. Some small notion of this is conveyed in Bliss's own Preface to the final volume (1952) which is reprinted here together with the Prefaces to the other volumes of Edition 1. A fuller and graphic picture is given of Bliss's work in Dr. Campbell's biographical memoir which forms Section 1 of this volume. Although the story of Bliss's work conveys to us (as it certainly did to Bliss himself) the impression of a prophet without honour in his own country it is no exaggeration to say that Bliss influenced strongly a whole generation of libraries, not only through the Bibliographic Classification itself but through the formidable theoretical studies of the organisation of knowledge which preceded it and laid its foundations.

Bliss's objective was always essentially a practical one, just as the function of a bibliographic classification is essentially the practical one of assisting the retrieval of information. In his 1952 Preface Bliss wrote: "Insofar as knowledge is developmental so shall classification be developmental." The practical implication of this is that a library classification, if it is to live and flourish must be revised continually and the preparation of this second edition of the Bibliographic Classification is a recognition of this need.

It will be clear from the most cursory comparison of the new schedules with those of Edition 1 that the revision is a radical one indeed. The reasons why this had to be are given in detail in Section 3 of this volume. If BC1 were likened to the ground plan of a noble city we could imagine Bliss, if he were to see this successor to his work, finding the general layout completely familiar. But on closer inspection of particular areas he would find structures he had scarcely envisaged, reflecting principles of construction of a rigour unknown in his day.

To pursue this particular metaphor would strain it beyond utility; but it is readily acknowledged here that the internal reconstruction of many of the classes has been very drastic and that this calls for explanation. Again, the reader is referred to Section 3 for the detailed chapter and verse and here only the fundamental reasons will be repeated, and briefly. These may be summarised as follows. The vocabulary of BC1 badly needed extensive updating and expansion. The detailed specification needed by the numerous special and semi-special libraries which are likely to be major users of BC could not be provided without extensive expansion of the facilities for synthesis, or composite specification as Bliss preferred to call it. Large scale synthesis imposes on a scheme a demand for a consistent and predictable pattern. Consistency and predictability were also essential requirements if BC is to be maintained and revised smoothly and economically in the future.

These demands constituted four interlocking criteria for a new edition. To them had to be added a further one – that the whole structure needed to be maintained by a notation for human scanning and use; this meant that the classmarks needed to be of reasonable length and simplicity. The complete brief which emerged therefore was a formidable one and the resources available to carry it out were relatively modest.

In producing BC1, Bliss himself had, of course, profited from the work of predecessors – from the brilliant innovations of Melvil Dewey, the first person to design a modern bibliographic classification, from the notational inventiveness of Otlet and La Fontaine and their successors in the UDC, from the massive scholarship of the Library of Congress classification and from the imaginative contributions of classificationists like Cutter and James Duff Brown. Bliss also received substantial help from many librarians and subject specialists, all of which he acknowledged generously.

In the same way this new version of the BC has been made possible by drawing extensively on the work done by its predecessors in the field of general and special classification and by many librarians of the

present generation. To all these we offer our grateful thanks. The introductions to the various classes include acknowledgements to those individuals on whose work we have drawn for the class in question, whether they are compilers of other classifications or thesauri, subject specialists, or colleagues whose advice we have sought in problems of analysis and design. There is not room here to acknowledge them individually but we should like to take this opportunity of thanking them again for their contribution to the scheme as a whole.

There remains a number of colleagues whose contributions have been invaluable to the overall design of the system and to whom we wish to extend our particular thanks. Pride of place here must go to the late S.R. Ranganathan, the pioneer of faceted classification and one of the greatest librarians of this or any other age. The daunting task of revising BC to meet the criteria summarized above could hardly have been attempted had it not been for the existence of a methodology for the design of bibliographic classifications capable of meeting the challenge, and the basis of that methodology is faceted classification.

Of inestimable value too have been the theoretical and practical contributions of our friends and colleagues in the Classification Research Group which since 1952 has played a significant part in developing the ideas of Ranganathan into the versatile and supple instrument which has made the new BC possible. Our particular thanks here go to E.J. Coates and D.W. Langridge, not only for their invaluable advice and criticism, ranging over every aspect of the system, but also for their unfailing patience and encouragement.

Erie Coates has also made particularly valuable contributions in the field of science and technology. His early work at the British National Bibliography resulted, inter alia, in the production of those models of classification design, the *Supplementary Classification Schedules* for the BNB (1963) which were drawn on extensively in the BC *Bulletins* during the 1960s. The auxiliary common schedules in this present volume also owe much to him, especially Schedule 3A Ethnic groups. Derek Langridge has also made particularly valuable contributions in the field of the humanities and to our greater awareness of the place of disciplines in the structure of a general classification. The contribution of these two friends and colleagues to the new BC has been incalculable.

We should also like to express our particular appreciation of the unstinting help and encouragement we have had from Jean Aitchison over a wide range of classes and problems.

We should like also to record our appreciation of the work of the Committee of the Bliss Classification Association which has guided the programme of revision and for the steady support and encouragement they have provided despite the setbacks and disappointments of a number of delays. Their names are given in the brief statement on the BCA which follows the Prefaces and we thank them all. In particular we thank Margaret Walker and D.J. Campbell for carefully reading all the drafts of this introductory volume and providing suitable comment. We are very grateful also to Anthony Curwen, of the College of Librarianship, Wales, and a member of the BCA for his meticulous vetting of all schedules before publication. Finally we thank Marian Biddel, Beryl Howes and Sybil Everitt for their endless patience and skill in the task of typing this introductory volume and classification schedules.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF VOLUME I

It is eleven years since *The Organization of Knowledge* was published, and five years since we put forth tentatively *A System of Bibliographic Classification*. If interests called for it, this completer work would be published. Interests have called for it, and the publication now seems justified.

Thirty years is a long time on an undertaking and to wait for the product. It is nearly thirty years since an article in *The Library Journal* outlined the system. Thirty years of growth and change have run out in this glass of time since the classification was applied in the Library of the College of the City of New York. The conditions there during a period of twenty years permitted of experiment and development in this work. That it has been adaptive to changes has been very advantageous. The changes there, however, have diverged from the original embodiment, and the changes that have been made in the author's published volume are otherwise divergent.

But the System published in 1935 has not been altered in this extended work, except in a few particulars. The few libraries and Bibliographic projects that have already adopted that system can readily apply the expanded schedules of this volume to develop their classifications.

The change in the title-page is, however, significant. The term Composite indicates an advance in the development of the principle of Systematic Schedules. These are regarded as more efficient and economical than the "number-bilding" of Dewey, the supplementary notations for the Decimal Classification of the International Institute, the expansive and cumbersome auxiliary tables of Cutter and of Brown, and the complex devices of Ranganathan's Colon Classification.

The term Bibliographic in the title implies that this extensive classification is applicable not merely to books on the shelves of libraries, but to subject-catalogs, union-catalogs, subject bibliographies, and other more special bibliographic services.

It is one of the purposes of this publication to demonstrate that a coherent and comprehensive system, based on the logical principles of classification consistent with the systems of science and education, may be available to services in libraries, to bibliographies, and to documentation. Another purpose is to aid revision and reconstruction of long established and more or less antiquated classifications. Without adoption of this system in its entirety, it is available to, requisite and inevitable development of other systems. A third purpose is to provide for subject-catalogs an adaptable, efficient, and economical classification, notation, and index. The broader purpose has been to contribute to the organization, clarification, and availability of knowledge – in the educational faith that knowledge avails where true purpose prevails.

In a period of infernal destruction and waste the philosophic view can look beyond to future reconstruction with probably better illumination of human values within divine, universal, and eternal purposes. In the vistas of hope we are intent to discern certain tendencies and even inchoate tentatives in reconstructions that are likely to prove more valid and durable. Especially this thought, or prophecy, regards future developments of libraries and bibliographies.

This work may be regarded as an elaborate protest against the inconsistencies of illogical alphabetic order of subjects of study and purpose. Its Index has been a long and difficult struggle with the complexities and confusion of language. If still imperfect, fatigue is our plea. Alphabetic order of subjects is hardly less difficult than logical order of classes of subjects. But both orders are needed.

If the usefulness of this volume and the demand for the continuation of the work should be manifest, it will, if possible, be continued and published. The material is partly ready now; several well-known contributors in this field have begun collaboration on the second volume.

In this first volume there has been little collaboration. The most distinct contribution has been Mr. F.W. Weiler's expansion of the systematic schedule for geographical specification of subjects (Schedule 2). Some of the schedules have been compared with those of The Library of Congress, the Decimal Classification, and other classifications.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement and assistance in my slow progress that I have received from Mr. W.C. Berwick Sayers, Mr. Lawrence A. Burgess, Mr. James Ormerod, and Mr. Cyril C. Barnard in England, from M. and Mme. E. de Grolier in France, and from the late Ernest Cushing Richardson, Mr. Charles Martel, Mr. J.C.M. Hanson, and others in America.

HENRY EVELYN BLISS  
Dobbs Ferry-on-Hudson, N.Y.  
May 15, 1940

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF VOLUME II

Six years of war have intervened since the first volume of our Classification was published in expanded form. So we have had plenty of time to read, study, write, and compile. This we is not merely editorial; and there are two senses to this sentence. We here means collaborators, whose highly valued work is acknowledged in the half-title pages that precede those parts. But we also means that the writer of this preface has done more than write it.

We began work on this volume in 1939, before the war started; so we have worked on the task as long as Laban, of whom the Bible has told. Now, before the second volume is done, we have begun work on the third volume; and we again is not merely editorial.

If the war has postponed this volume's publication, it has also positively prepared for it. It has induced thinkers, writers, educators, and librarians to face in earnest the conditions of readjustment and reconstruction. This is avowed of bibliographic classification more pointedly now than at any prior stage of the developmental period of seventy years since the advent of the Decimal Classification. The need for revision of classification and subject-cataloging is at present more urgently declared in special fields not only in the natural sciences but especially in the human studies.

This volume embodies in the four Classes included specification adequate to most special needs in the vastly important studies of Humanity: Anthropology, the Medical Sciences, Psychology, Education, Sociology, Ethnology and Ethnography, and Human Geography. The entire world is now struggling with the problems of these fields. The literature has become immense and of course is rapidly increasing. Bibliography and librarianship must handle it, must systemize it, must make it more efficiently available. This work would proffer help, whether for revision and readjustment, or for reconstruction, not only for classifications but for subject-catalogs.

It is edifying to find that our Volume I often stands where the classifiers and catalogers can readily reach it, for reference or for supplementation. This second volume should companion it in that service – and no less helpfully.

To the many librarians and bibliographers who have adopted and applied our Classification and are constantly using our System (published in 1935), which provides the complete Classification in condensed form, and who are supplementing that use by the expanded Classification in Volume 1, for the Natural Sciences, technologies, and for Philosophy, we now proffer the second volume for even more exigent bibliographic requirements; and we promise to complete the Classification as soon as it is feasible to do so.

Those who use our System are free to adapt it to their interests and needs. The few alterations that we have more recently proposed should not complicate their adaptations. Those who develop their special schedules are desired to contribute them. If they are adaptable to our System and if we embody them, due acknowledgement will be published, when and where it will be convenient.

HENRY EVELYN BLISS  
Block Island, R.I.  
September 15, 1946

#### PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF VOLUME III

Half a century has trudged onward with its great burdens and its high hopes since this work was projected to serve a comparatively unimportant local situation. Since the Outline of this classification was first published in *The Library Journal* in 1910 forty-two years have elapsed. It is thirty years since the more comprehensive and more important work was undertaken in 1922. The first book was published in 1929, *The Organization of Knowledge and the System of the Sciences*. Six years after that the Classification was issued in condensed form as a *System of Bibliographic Classification*. It had been originated and imperfectly applied in the Library of the College of the City of New York before that was moved in 1908 to the uptown location in which the College had recently been reestablished with more expansive purposes. A concise publication of the Classification had been planned in 1913, but the World War of 1914-18 ruthlessly postponed such bibliothecal projects. The period of development was thus extended thru twenty-eight years before the *System* was published in 1935. Gradual too during the years 1940-1952 has been the progress of the expanded Classification, elaborated and complete in four volumes. The several prefaces of these volumes have referred to this gradual progress.

This *Bibliographic Classification*, consistent with valid and stable logical principles and with the relatively permanent organization of knowledge, as its predecessors evidently and admittedly were not, has required but little alteration during the fifty years of its development. Such changes as have been requisite have been readily and adaptively embodied. To provide, where feasible, for persistent different views of the relations of scientific and educational studies alternative locations are indicated in many references thruout the Classification.

Thus the system is not merely scientific, nor indeed merely philosophical, but from its inception to the present it has been practical in its purposes and in its development. This has been recognized by appreciative critics.

Consideration for the economies of many libraries of scientific and educational institutions, schools, colleges, and universities, in which our Classification has been adopted and applied, deters us from drastic alterations, unless very urgent. But a few changes, major and minor, are described in the sixth,

seventh, ninth, and eleventh sections of Chapter IV of the Introduction to this Volume III, and perhaps elsewhere.

Insofar as knowledge is developmental so should classifications be developmental. Consequently there will be future additions and alterations. We hope that our system will prove to be relatively adaptable to such changes. It will probably be feasible to issue from time to time supplementary lists that will advise and indicate such alterations and additions; and even a new edition, or editions, may be feasible, with due considerations for the economies, especially those of libraries. Such a work is inevitably imperfect, despite all the time and labor that have been devoted to it; and in a sense this completed work is still incomplete, the feasibly developmental.

The assistance of several collaborators in special fields is acknowledged under the half-title headings of the respective Classes, and some particulars are given. But for any faults that may be found the author is mainly responsible.

HENRY EVELYN BLISS  
Winter Park, Florida  
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