

and threat to library conservation is the “perceived decline in the essentialness of cultural artifacts,” noted by the editors in their introductory essay. In the book’s closing essay, Michael Suarez argues that librarians who justify discarding copies of books by deferring to access copies of a single microfilmed or digitized image of the book are irrevocably impoverishing the diversity of the material published record.

As an educator and steward of a university rare book collection, I found *Flood in Florence, 1966: A Fifty-Year Retrospective* to be thoroughly enjoyable reading as well as a point of departure for stimulating discussions with students and colleagues. The book is significant as a published, material record of the symposium and a testament to those individuals past and present dedicated to the field of book conservation. Finally, this book reminds us that preserving books and manuscripts is not really about saving artifacts for their own sake, but for ours.—*Tamara E. Livingston, Kennesaw State University*

John Carter’s ABC for Book Collectors, 9th edition. Nicholas Barker and Simran Thadani, eds. (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Books, 2017) ISBN: 978-1-58456-352-5 and **Sidney E. Berger**. *The Dictionary of the Book: A Glossary for Book Collectors, Booksellers, Librarians, and Others* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Dictionaries and encyclopedias represent bundles of choices. No book is large enough to address every aspect of its topic. Space is always at a premium. There are always more terms or variants that could be included. Publication due dates always limit how much more time one could devote to a project. The choices made by authors of these two books listing terms describing books shape the works, of course, but also provide the basis for judging them together. There is merit in a head-to-head comparison.

John Carter first published the *ABC* in 1952 and carried the work through five editions himself. Nicholas Barker inherited the effort to produce a sixth edition (1980) and eventually two more. Now Barker is joined by a coeditor in Simran Thadani; this collaboration brings a classic work to its third generation. Carter’s work was conceived as a serious but not somber aid to book collectors who wanted an introduction to the arcana of book description terms used in trade catalogues. The heart of *ABC* in the most recent edition are still, naturally, Carter’s own entries, supplemented through subsequent editions with terms like *Internet*. The focus tends to be on terms useful to collectors of volumes from the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries and remains on physical aspects and features of codices and bindings, publication, and classic large-scale bibliographies and their compilers. Carter’s original imprecations are retained, such as the one on *Issue-mongers*, which

still sparks a smile in me as readily as when I encountered the book years ago. The editors usually append a qualifying phrase or paragraph pointing to its origin—but they have not yet been dropped (and I hope they never are). I trust we can agree that Carter succeeded marvelously; there are good reasons for a classic work to remain a classic.

On the other hand, the newer volume by Sidney Berger has the benefit of being a second-comer to the field. Berger opens his introduction to the *Dictionary* by explicitly invoking Carter's earlier volume. His second-place position allows him to use Carter's work as a pattern and a standard. Berger intentionally continues and expands on Carter's definitions, occasionally reacting to them, and certainly filling its omissions. Occasionally, one will find an entry noting that it is included in the *Dictionary* only because *ABC* had an entry for the same term. The observation is not to imply at all that the former is merely an expansion or a re-rendition of the latter. The *Dictionary* is far larger, and entries are far longer and much more complete than those that appear in *ABC*. While Carter/Barker/Thadani's volume concentrates attention on books, Berger's *Dictionary* supplements book and book-arts terms with terms from typesetting, printing, publishing, and selling. Readers will particularly appreciate the appendices, which list type terms and binding terms, while providing a guide to traditional handmade paper sizes.

It is in the contents that the greatest difference becomes apparent. *ABC* is still slim at about 260 pages, with a few scattered but well-executed color images illustrating key terms. The *Dictionary* stands at more than 300 pages in double columns, making it approximately twice the size of its competitor. Curiously, both volumes still miss terms in wide use. For instance, both have an entry for the National Union Catalogue, but (curiously) neither contains an entry for an *NUC code*, the foundation for census locations in hundreds of published bibliographies—and, now that I think about it, neither book has an entry for *census* either.

Finally, a fully honest review merits at least a mention of the two books' pronounced physical differences. *ABC* retains the charming dimension of books from bygone years, as bespeaks its status as a handbook and a classic. *ABC* is a pleasant thing to hold, of a size that was once popularly called *octavo*, the size of a modern trade paperback. It sits neatly on a common shelf. Even in a hard binding that increases the dimensions slightly, its comparatively small size gives the volume a charm and physical sense of *being* a handbook. Regrettably, the *Dictionary*'s publishers seem to have dumped the text into their standard design and format. While the subtitle notes that the intended audience is "book collectors, booksellers, and librarians," the 8-1/2 × 11 trim size, plus its own hard binding, make the book an unlikely candidate for a home-library bookshelf. The *Dictionary*'s publisher erred

by making that volume the same dimension as a library reference book. Its physical format fits a library reference collection; it simply looks and feels out of place on a collector's shelf (it does in mine, since it must lie flat or be shelved on fore edge or spine). *ABC* retains the useful and charming practice, begun by John Carter in 1952 with the book's first edition, of identifying the physical elements of a book on Carter's book itself. The free endpapers are labeled "This is the *free ENDPAPER*" and "This is the *paste-down ENDPAPER*" (*endpaper* being capitalized as a term among the book's entries). Even elements of the dust jacket are labeled (except the turn-ins—a cue for the 10/e). Within entries, terms used in one entry and defined elsewhere in the volume appear in small caps. The *Dictionary* makes the unfortunate choice of failing to identify terms with a change in typography, instead preferring to identify them by inserting a trailing Latin abbreviation in parentheses, as "(q.v.)", *quod vide* or *see this entry*. The choice is not wrong, but the abbreviation's use on the page over and over again strikes me as distracting for a modern reader. It is certainly worth swapping out for setting other defined terms in boldface or small caps in subsequent editions.

Despite similarities, the books appeal to different readerships and serve different purposes. Carter's original volume was a comment on the "gentle madness" of book collecting rather than an authority for pursuing it, and as such has neither citations nor references. *ABC* was meant to be read, whereas the *Dictionary* is meant to be consulted. Berger's *Dictionary* is much broader, much more complete, more scholarly, and suitable for explorers of the book and bookselling both in study and in practice. The particularly good bibliography alone runs to 16 double-column pages of other reference and descriptive works across related fields. The latest edition of Carter's *ABC* will likely retain its classic status as a work of not only usefulness, but also for "Carter's erudition and humor" (*Dictionary*, "Degressive Bibliography"). *John Carter's ABC for Book Collectors* is suitable for a casual fireside read for the bookishly well-informed, but Berger's *Dictionary of the Book* is the more complete and up-to-date. Both books are excellent for different reasons. Thus, for collectors, sellers, and librarians, there really need be no competition.—Richard L. Saunders,
Southern Utah University