

Is it wrong of me to admit that as an academic and bibliophile I rarely find myself willing to pay the full price for any book, instead looking for bargains in bookshops and on the Internet, sometimes waiting over a year for a popular new title to appear at a price I am willing to pay? I mention this only because the Library of Congress's paean to the card catalogue was a very rare exception to this, and I willingly handed over my cash as soon as I saw a copy in the Bodleian Shop this summer.

Was it worth it? Oh, yes. Discussed in some other reviews I have seen as a coffee table book filled with nostalgia, this work, although definitely glossy and highly-illustrated is so much more than that. The chapter titles reveal the intellectual approach that has been taken in this analysis of one of the world's most famous catalogues: "Origins -- The Enlightened Catalog -- Constructing a Catalog -- The Nation's Library and Catalog -- The Rise and Fall of the Card Catalog."

Is it an in-depth academic treatise? No, of course not. In the main it is a selection of quite beautiful catalogue cards – some heavily annotated and amended – set face-to-face with the title pages, covers or selected contents of the work they describe. These have been contextualized in language aimed clearly at the generalist, whether practicing librarian or interested book-lover. Stars of the profession like Jewett and Dewey are highlighted alongside their contributions, and some of the most famous book illustrations from the USA are shown in all their glory, often next to an obviously well-thumbed card. The 1851 Harper *Moby-Dick* (better known to us in the UK as published by Bentley) on pages 94-95 is a particularly good example of this – the famous image of the tail flicking the boat out of the water is shown next to a foxed and scruffy book-jacket and a clear hand-written card, complete with accession number and a crossed out move of number at one point from LCC PZ to PS as both classification scheme and practices developed.

Obviously for me, this is one of the practical and educational uses of this book. To be able to show students how our cataloguing practices have changed over the years using something so well-produced will be a joy next year. Thus far, we have used the *British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books* (1955) and later online catalogues (BL, ESTC and ISTC) to see how things have changed – more local to us, just as intellectually satisfying, but less physically attractive. I look forward to being able to show both "Anglo" and "American" changes in our Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, using, as we always do, the LC catalogues and authority files and this new, shiny, and extremely satisfying book.

In summary, for cataloguers: *The Card Catalog* – open for the pictures, read for the quite amazing changes to our rules played out in the cards the Library of Congress has chosen to reproduce.

