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A Handbook for Scholars, by Mary-Claire van Leunen, Knopf, New York, 1978, ix + 358 pp., \$12.95 (paperback \$5.95).

How does one write a good mathematics paper? By discovering good mathematics, to begin with—to make rabbit stew, first catch the rabbit. Then comes thinking the material through until it falls into the right order with the right emphasis; this is the cooking that makes the material digestible. But there are also special techniques for scholarly writing, the seasonings that make it fit to serve. Now by definition a mathematician can work out mathematics. Thesis advisers and referees when necessary give us some ideas on organization. For good advice on seasoning, turn to this new book by van Leunen.

Her advice of course is not directed just to mathematicians, and topics like punctuating verbatim quotations are more important in other areas. We may also feel a certain complacency when she advocates bracketed numbers and a list of references in place of bibliographical footnotes. But much of the book will be useful—there is even a careful discussion of how to write an academic vita—and it is all quite enjoyable to read. The tricks and conventions of scholarly writing are not intrinsically interesting, but van Leunen treats the topics like a bowl of peanuts: she sprinkles in just enough epigrammatic salt that the reader who has finished one automatically reaches out for the next. The following samples will suggest the flavor.

—Some characteristic faults of scholarly writing result from authors' attempts never to call themselves anything at all. They seem to confuse objectivity with disembodiment.

—Most of us who went to American grade schools can remember long hours of copying articles out of encyclopedias. "The abode of the penguin is a hard and difficult one." It was called doing research. Then in college we found it was also called plagiarism.

—You may know from private knowledge that behind the initials of "M. H. Peters" lies Mandrake Hannibal, but it's no business of yours to tell the world. Familiarity is equally out of place. "G. Kitson Clark" is the way you style the author you are citing, even if he asks you to call him "Kitsy" over lunch.

—Do I need to say that male and female authors are treated just alike? Apparently, since I just read an article in which C. Vann Woodward was consistently called "Woodward" and C. V. Wedgwood was consistently called "Cecily Wedgwood" or "Miss Wedgwood." A pox on false gentility.

—Remember that "above" as an adjective falls in the appositive (following) position rather than the attributive (preceding) position—"the lemma above," not "the above lemma." I never heard anyone try to say "the below lemma."

—If you find yourself writing an introduction that seems to be nothing more than a table of contents, why not substitute a table of contents?

—Sit down and talk over with your typist what you have in mind. There's