

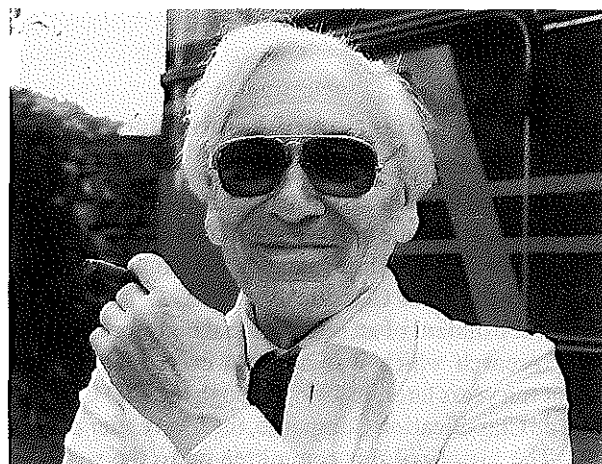
## Interview with Eric de Grolier

*Eric, you became interested in classification already as early as 1931 and ever since Dorking 1957 you have been known to the community of classificationists as somebody without whom no classification conference was a worthwhile undertaking. You participated in every FID/CR conference and many similar events and your contributions were invaluable for all of us present. Please, let us hear something about yourself, your life of which none of us seems to know anything. And let us start at the beginning. May I ask you about your family?*

I was born at Paris, 68 rue de la Tour (near the Trocadéro) on 25 June 1911. On my father's side the family can be traced back to the 17th century, when a certain Jean-Antoine I Randon, born at Anduze in 1634 and deceased in 1717, was knighted by King Louis XIV. One of his sons became a canon of Toulouse. The Randons de Grolier were one of the eight branches of the numerous offspring of Jean-Antoine. My great-grandfather was an officer of the Royal French Navy and in that capacity was one of the first French explorers of Tahiti; in his youth he had apparently been a Saint-Simonian socialist and as such some sort of a conspirator. My grandfather, looking for a wife, went to Budapest, where he married a countess von Siegmund-Szlavy, a half-Austrian (her father had been an adjutant to Emperor Franz Josef II) and half-Hungarian. My grandmother on my father's side sang quite well, it seems; she had been a pupil of Pauline Viardot and - at the piano - of Franz Liszt. As to my father, he married Varvara Testov, the daughter of a very famous Moscow restaurant operator, who had the honor of figuring in the monologue of one of Anton Tchekhov's 'Three Sisters'. Varvara was a painter, influenced by the impressionists and, as it seems, by Fantin-Latour and the Pont-Aven school. My father wrote stories and letters of sorts for a Toulon journal; he was a friend of Marguerite Audoux, Emile Guillaumin and Octave Mirbeau. He left a collection of thoughts in classical French style ('Oscillations') which I have been able to edit only in microfiche form.

*When listening to the papers you gave at the different conferences, everybody was amazed realizing your remarkable background. Tell us, where did you receive your education?*

I did my first learning at home: with my mother (who spoke Russian to me), my grandmother (who spoke German to me), and my father and my aunt Hélène (who both spoke French to me). At the age of six I attended lessons at a now defunct private school at the Rue Cortambert, following which, at the age of seven, I



entered the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly, which I attended all the way to the top form. However, as I interrupted my schooling to go to work (my family was in considerable financial straits), I graduated from this school only after much delay. Once I had passed this formality I enrolled at Sorbonne University, Paris, where I attended the seminars of the philosopher André Lalande (writing there two or three papers on the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers, on Cournot and on Mach), as well as at the Institute for the History of Science and Technology, newly created by Abel Rey (whom I dared to contradict in a paper on the Egyptian origins of Greek science, thus provoking his wrath, with the result that I never set foot there again). Later (1938-40) I attended the courses of Georges Lefebvre on the French Revolution as well as the seminars of Labrousse and Dolléans at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Practical School of Higher Learning), where I intended to submit a thesis on the labor movement in the book trade. I obtained a degree in sociology from Maurice Halbwachs, but I miserably flunked my history examination on the subject 'The Flight to Varennes', upon which I left the Sorbonne (I returned after the war to the Hautes Etudes to attend Bettelheim's seminar on planned economy).

In 1950-51 I returned to formal study, this time at the National Conservatory for Arts and Trades, where the National Institute for Documentation Techniques (INTD) had just been created - with the peculiarity that I was a student and a professor there at the same time... I obtained my diploma in 1952 with the 'jury's congratulations'. Besides that, I had already obtained in 1929 the diploma of the Publishing and Bookselling Courses organized by the Bookselling Circle.

*So you studied philosophy, history, sociology and later on documentation/information science and you acquired also knowledge in the Publishers' Trade. In which way did you apply all of this knowledge to earn a living?*

I started working at the age of 15, at the Paris Stock Exchange, as an apprentice with the licensed stock

broker Delahaye. He would have liked to keep me and promised me that I would later obtain a license of myself. But my stepmother (a Romanian doctor and researcher at the Institute Pasteur, my father's second wife) considered the Stock Exchange not 'intellectual' enough for me and made me seek employment at the Librairie Gibert, a large bookstore in the Quartier Latin, which I entered in October 1927 and where I was given charge of the 'service organisation classique' a file on the basis of which the bookstore fixed its purchasing and selling prices of used classical books and its orders of new books.

In 1929 a young Swede, Mr. Beckman, ran an advertisement in the *Bibliographie de la France* in which he sought a collaborator for starting a new bookstore. I offered my services and was accepted. At that bookstore, 'Ex-libris', I remained for slightly over a year. I went back to Gibert in 1933 and remained there until 1936, this time in the capacity of 'head of the bibliographic service'; then a third time in 1940-41 to head their foreign department. In between, from 1937-38, I had set up a specialized bookstore for social sciences, law, etc. for Mr. Epstein, who published the journal 'Droit social' (Social Law). Once more I became a bookseller, this time in 'luxury' books as well as old ones, as director of a 'Maison du Bibliophile', a dependency of the Editions Rombaldi (1942-47) and then in order to create a retail bookstore controlled by the Société Parisienne d'Édition (1948-49).

During several months I was secretary-general of a literary agency called *Agence Littéraire Internationale* and set up by a Hungarian Jew, Mr. Didier-Schwartz, who, among other things, had exclusive contracts with a certain number of big names, among them André Maurois. The time, I believe, was between April and August 1939; as soon as the German-Soviet pact was announced, Mr. Didier-Schwartz closed up his agency and left for the United States.

During WW II, Bertrand de Jouvenel made me join the staff of Pierre Havard, who was then 'Director of the press in the occupied zone'. In actual fact this was a kind of cover for a certain number of active opponents of the Vichy regime, among them Charles Bettelheim, David Rousset and Anselme. When Havard had gone, this "leadership" was taken over by Mr. Piétri, who kept me on a few more weeks until Paul Marion ordered him to get rid of me. Hélène Duseigneur - later to become Mrs. Bertrand de Jouvenel - then got me a job as research director at a certain Institute of Political and Social Studies, one of whose collaborators was Jean Hyppolite, a Hegel specialist.

After obtaining my INTD diploma (in 1952) I was offered by the then director of studies Jean Dubas the job of reorganizing the documentation center of the CGT, the Federation of French Labor Unions, which was headed by Pierre Le Brun, a member of the Economic and Social Council. In fact, Le Brun put me in charge especially of a number of studies within the framework

of the activities of the French Economic and Social Council's Commission for Business and National Income, then headed by Alfred Sauvy, on which commission I was considered an 'expert'.

In 1955 there was a lively debate inside the CGT on a thesis held by Communist Party chief Maurice Thorez, according to which the French worker class had undergone 'absolute pauperization' since Napoleon III's Second Empire. The CGT's Center for Economic Studies was requested to furnish pertinent proof, and Le Brun asked me to conduct this study. Its results were negative. However, the CGT was nevertheless obliged to keep supporting the Thorez thesis for some time.

Under these circumstances I was quite happy when an opportunity for a change of jobs turned up: the Bureau de Documentation Minière (BDM) controlled by the Ministry of Industry, was looking for a documentalist. I stayed there slightly over a year (1956-57), mainly occupied with research on certain subjects which interested the BDM director, Mr. Ventura, a brilliant mining engineer whose specialty was operational research. I drew up a study on Soviet oil and another one on worldwide iron ore and manganese supply.

In March/April 1957 the Ministry of Economics was looking for someone able to set up in Italy a French technical exchange and documentation center to serve more or less as 'showcase' of French technology for Italian industrialists. I got the job and headed this Center from 1957 to 1961, but in actual fact the 'documentation' was only a little sideshow, with the work essentially consisting of organizing French-Italian talks on topical technical matters and of facilitating personal contacts between French and Italian specialists, study trips, etc.

In 1961, ambassador Burin des Rozières, who had been consul general at Milan before becoming ambassador in Warsaw, gave me the job of repeating in Poland the mission I had performed at Milan.

In 1962 I had two possibilities: either to leave for Teheran in order to do there the same job as in Milan and Warsaw (I had also handled a brief exploratory mission of the same type at Prague), or to remain in Paris where two jobs were waiting for me: that of managing director of the French branch of the Dutch publishers Edition Mouton of The Hague, and that of "research office director" of the International Council of Social Sciences (CISS) - both more or less being considered as part-time jobs.

Opting for Paris, I thus became manager of Mouton Paris from 1962 to 1969 and CISS research office director from 1962 to 1965, after which my title was changed to "scientific consultant".

In 1970 Editions Mouton (The Hague) changed their orientation and reduced their activities in France prior to stopping them completely when they were taken over by De Gruyter, Berlin. From that time on I have held no more steady professional jobs except in the teaching field and on Unesco expert missions.

*Gee, this very much changes the picture I have always had in mind when thinking of you as a professor in information science. So you have not always been a teacher? But you must have started teaching already in the thirties?*

Yes, in 1938 the Association for the Development of Public Reading (ADLP) and the French Union of Documentation Organizations (UFOD) sponsored a 'Cycle of Lectures on Documentation and Public Reading', which I had proposed to them and which was organized, as far as the documentation part was concerned, by myself and Pierre Bourgeois, then deputy of Jean Gérard at the House of Chemistry (and later director of the Swiss National Library at Berne), and, as far as the public reading was concerned, by my first wife, Georgette de Grolier, née Ocasiano. Mr. Jacques Soustelle, then deputy director of the Musée de l'Homme had made a lecturing hall available to us. I myself gave four or five lectures on the sociology and psychology of reading and one on classification.

In 1941 I wrote, together with Georgette de Grolier, a voluminous report on 'The professional training of documentalists and librarians', which was mimeographed and distributed by the aforementioned UFOD. While there was no immediate follow-up, this report was basic to the 'Technical Documentation Courses' of the UFOD (1945-49), taken over in the following by the CNAM at the aforementioned INTD.

In the framework of the UFOD courses, I gave the course on classification and a further course on the development of communication techniques. The classification course was later taken over by the INTD.

From 1970 to 1975 I was secretary-general of the INTD, where I organized the so-called 'Cycle Supérieur', the creation of which had been one of the proposals made to the Institute's 'reform commission' set up following the May 1968 'happenings'. At the same time I gave numerous courses there and served on the juries of admission and for the judging of papers.

In 1970 I organized the first instruction in documentation at the Institute of Technology of the University of Tours and subsequently taught there until 1977.

Under a contract with the French Cooperation Ministry I gave a technical documentation course at the University of Dakar in 1971. Under another contract, this time with a private Canadian organization for technical cooperation, I organized, together with a colleague from Montreal, a seminar on Management Information Systems at Algiers in 1980.

In 1972 I was a guest professor at the University of Pittsburgh at the invitation of Allen Kent, in charge of the Information Science Department there.

From 1978 to 1980 I was a guest professor at the Library Economics school of the University of Montréal.

In 1975, Unesco had asked me to organize the 'technical' part of instruction at the 'Ecole des Sciences de l'Information' or ESI, set up at Rabat, Morocco, with

the aid of PNUD funds - which I did. There were at the time two professors for technical matters, myself and a library specialist, Mrs. Salhi. In 1976 I was to be named Director of Studies, but the Moroccan director of the school, Mr. Fassi Fhiri, was against it, and I returned to give courses at the ESI only in 1982, called back by the new director Mr. Benjelloun. From 1982 to 1985 I thereupon gave various courses there and supervised the drafting of papers.

*I see, your teaching has also given you many chances to go abroad and learn about other people's problems and concerns. Have you also received assignments to 'expert missions'?*

Yes, indeed, there were several: In 1962, at the request of Mr. J. Duhamel, the then director of the French Foreign Trade Center, I carried out a mission with a view to reorganizing the documentation services of this Center (of which, however, no report is retained).

In 1966, for the account of the OECD, I undertook a mission to Greece with a view to establishing there a national scientific and technical documentation center (a very concise report on this is available at the OECD archives).

For UNESCO I undertook a mission to Jordan in 1977 with a view to the creation, then envisaged, of a scientific and technical information center, and another one to Algeria in 1976 for the reorganization of that country's economic and social documentation. The pertinent reports have been published by UNESCO.

For the INTD I have undertaken two expert missions: one to the Roussel Laboratories and one to Télémécanique Électrique, both with a view to reorganizing their scientific and technical information services (internal documents, not published).

In 1984, under a contract with the Canadian Federal Organization for Technical Cooperation, I made a study in Senegal of a reorganization of the local scientific and technical information system. The voluminous report drawn up has remained in the archives and has not been published.

*Last year you told me that you wanted to organize a conference on the history of classification. It sounded as if you had already had some experiences in the organization of conferences, but so far, I have not heard of any such event organized by you.*

Well, this is not my fault! Indeed, within the framework of my activities for the ADLP, the Association for the Development of Public Reading, I organized two international conferences: one on the Sociology and Psychology of Reading, and one on Regional Systems of Libraries and Documentation Services. If memory serves me right, this was in 1938-39.

As director of the French Technical Exchange and Documentation Center at Milan, I organized in that city in 1961 - with the support and cooperation of Mr.

Morandi, at that time one of the directors of Montecatini and the stimulator of numerous organizational initiatives in the technical field in Milan - a large-scale International Conference on Scientific and Technical Information, the reports on which have partly been published and a fairly long review of which appeared in the *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France*.

At Tours in 1971, with the support of the Université François Rabelais, I organized a conference (national, this time) on STI teaching and research; the pertinent reports were mimeographed.

In a wholly different field I organized and chaired, with UNESCO support, an international conference on the origins and development of language, held at Paris in 1981 at the UNESCO premises. The chief reports were published in 1983 in a volume of which I was the editor.

At the International Congress of the Ethnological and Anthropological Sciences held at Vancouver in 1983, I organized a symposium on Glossogenesis, which was at the origin of the creation of Language Origins Society (LOS), of which I was named secretary-general.

*It is a pity that there has never been an FID/CR conference in France, organized by you! I know that you had been the European Vice-Chairman of this group during the chairmanship of Ranganathan, Mølgaard Hansen, and Neelamghar, that is between say 1950-1980, some 30 years and you are still the French representative in this group. Have you also been active in other scientific organizations?*

Oh yes, already in 1930 I joined the "Bureau Bibliographique de France" (BBF) and subsequently served as its deputy secretary from 1932 or 33 until the dissolution of this organization in 1947 (before WWI it had been the principal medium for the dissemination of the ideas of Paul Otlet in France. From 1933 to 1945-46 I more or less represented the BBF at the UFOD (see above), founded by Jean Gérard, administrator of the Maison de la Chimie, and I collaborated regularly in its work, mainly on questions of national bibliography, legal deposit, and classification.

With Georgette de Grolier, I was one of the founders of a curious association named ABP (Association of Proletarian Libraries), intending to develop, within the framework of the AEAR (Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists) a sort of 'leftist' movement of 'public reading'. The tensions existing within the AEAR between communists, anarchists, surrealists, etc. repeated themselves in the little ABP group (comprising some 15-20 persons), which after some 3 years of existence practically ceased to function towards 1933-34.

Its tasks were taken over, in a far less "political" sense, by the Association for the Development of Public Reading, of which Georgette de Grolier was secretary-general and I a deputy secretary. This ADLP was active only for a mere 4 years, from 1936-39. Never officially dissolved, it ceased to function in 1940 with the occupation of France by the Germans.

In 1936 I had taken a rather active part in the creation of a Union of Bookselling and Publishing Employees and Higher Staff within the CGT Federation of Trade Unions. At the liberation of France, in 1944-45, the CGT leaders asked me to create such a union, of which I was the secretary until 1947. As such, I was a member of a bipartite labor/management commission within the 'Cercle de la Librairie' in charge of settling disputes concerning the classification and qualification requirements of higher staff jobs in this professional field.

Mention must be made here of a little known episode: the creation, towards 1943, of an Association for the Study of Bibliographic Questions whose purpose was to promote the creation of a 'Bibliothèque Centrale du Monde' (BCM). Its stimulator was a Japanese researcher at the Institut Pasteur, Mr. Dusi, and its members included Jacques Madaule and Mr. de Gandillac. I prepared the 'technical' part of a draft of a BCM, which was presented at a meeting in 1945 or 46 and promptly rejected as perfectly utopian. And in fact there certainly was something utopian to this project which, to avoid the risks of destruction arising from wars (of which there had been no lack between 1939 and 1945), proposed to establish the BCM at the Kerguelen islands.

In 1946-47, together with Miss Wetzel, then a conservator at a university library, we - Georgette de Grolier and I - tried to set up an Association for the Study of the Sociology and Psychology of Reading. This effort failed for lack of interest on the part of the professionals; its only lasting result was a test developed by Georgette de Grolier and a psychologist specializing in education (Mrs. Alphandéry, if memory serves me right).

Far more recently, in 1981, I took the initiative for calling together a conference on what I proposed to call 'glossogenetics' - the study of the origins and the development of language. It has led to the creation of the LOS (see above).

*So far, except for the reports on your expert missions and your manuscripts for courses you did not mention any of your publications. Would you have a personal bibliography at hand of all documents you ever produced?*

Unfortunately not. A series of changes of residence, as well as the gift I made in 1956 to the UFOD of my library and my archives (which must be stored somewhere near Royaumont, with the UFOD files) make it practically impossible for me to draw up a complete bibliography of my works. Thus I can only try here to recall and hope that perhaps somebody will try to pull all these efforts together - in case you should consider this worthwhile.

My first published article was called (in French) *Rational organization in the bookstore* and was the result of my experiences with Gibert, with Ex-libris and also in the drafting of the first *General Catalogue of Exclusive Goods* of the Messageries Hachette, which Georgette

de Grolier and I prepared in 1931 (a second edition appeared in 1933, and the format established by us served in the following as basis for the *Biblio* formula). The article was published in the journal *Tous les Livres* of the Messageries Hachette.

The second article, I believe, was the one devoted to the *Bibliographic Classification of H.E. Bliss*, which had been the subject of a lecture I had delivered at the Bureau Bibliographique de France and later of a report to the conference of the IIB (now FID) at The Hague in 1931. It appeared in the report of this conference.

In 1930 or 31 there appeared the first (and only!) issue of a *Bibliographie Ex-libris*, intended as a French version of the Book Review Digest of the H.W. Wilson Co.

Between 1933 and 1940 I wrote not a few articles and reviews for the *Revue du Livre*, later renamed *Revue du Livre et des Bibliothèques*, for which Mr. Joseph Gibert had agreed to pay the printing costs and of which Georgette de Grolier was the director. A certain number of articles was also published by the *Bulletin de l'UFOD*, mainly on the legal deposit, the national bibliography, and on classification.

At the 'Congrès Mondial de la Documentation Universelle' organized by Jean Gérard and Pierre Bourgeois in 1937, I presented a report on classification which was printed in the proceedings of the congress. On all this, see my *Théorie et pratique des Classifications Documentaires*, 1956, p.248-250.

*This latter was your dissertation, wasn't it?*

Yes, that's right. It was printed by UFOD, however incompletely.

Between 1937-38 and 1944-45, my principal interest shifted to the study of mass communications, of propaganda and of public opinion, this under the influence of Douglas Waples (who had come to Paris for the Conference on the Sociology of Reading), of - above all - Lasswell, whose entire production I had read, and, a little later, of Charles Madge and his 'Mass Observations'.

Thanks to Hélène Duseigneur (whom I mentioned already) and to Mr. Germain, the director of IEPS, I was able to write two studies on *Propaganda and Public Opinion in the United States* and *Information and Propaganda in the USSR*, which were 'published' in some 50 copies by an alcohol printing process. One copy of each must have been preserved at the BDIC (Library of Contemporary International Documentation) where I had worked and which now forms part of the Nanterre University Library. The first study (on the US), which appeared in 1943, was afterwards almost completely rewritten and was to be published in 1945 by the Editions Marcel Rivière; I had corrected already the galley-proofs. Unfortunately, the paper 'quota' necessary for the printing was not granted to the publisher in time, and the publication was not realized. Maybe the Editions

Sirey, who have taken over the Rivière stocks, still have in their files a copy of these corrected galley-proofs...

The second study contains a fairly extensive essay on the *Leninist Theory of Information and Propaganda* which I believe to be of some value still; it also has a chapter on the *Moscow Trials* which I had clearly perceived at the time as being in the nature of propaganda rather than of justice.

Likewise by the alcohol printing process, the IEPS 'published' a series of four or five articles written by me in 1944 on the *Theory of Information and Opinion*. With these I am much less satisfied: it was a rather superficial job, undertaken at a time (March-June 1944) when we all had our minds elsewhere and when, moreover, the IEPS, financed by Vichy, was torn by internal conflicts.

From 1942-44 I did a great deal of work on the 'regional' aspects of libraries, bookstores, etc. in France - under the influence of the fundamental study of L.R. Wilson (*Geography of Reading*). It resulted in two or three addresses I delivered at the CNOF (French National Organization Committee) at the initiative of Mr. Migeon, head of that committee's documentation commission. The published result was a long article in the single issue that has appeared of a journal entitled *Livre et Document*, which aspired to be the successor to the *Revue du Livre et des Bibliothèques*, but which was abandoned by its financial sponsor (Laurent Rombaldi) and which ended up ... at the junkyard, as nine tenths of the edition had failed to find buyers.

In the 1950s I published some articles on classification in the FID journal (*Revue de la Documentation*) and in *ABCD*, which had been launched by the UFOD. They were by-products of my work as 'co-reporter for Europe' of the FID/CR Committee of which I had been the promotor and Ranganathan the chief reporter (and the far more prolific author).

Through the intermediacy of J. Madaule the Presses Universitaires de France had asked Georgette de Grolier and me to write a brief essay on *Les Livres et la Vie*, which appeared in 1944. Ten years later I wrote for the collection 'Que sais-je?' (What do I know?) the first version of the volume *Histoire du Livre*, which was translated into Japanese. (It has since been replaced by a totally different new version, written by A. Labarre).

My association with the Maison du Bibliophile from 1942-47 had induced me to follow assiduously the sales of books and autographs at the Hotel Drouot and had made me deplore the absence of a directory of book sales on the French market, comparable to those existing for sale on the Anglosaxon and German markets. This led to the 6 volumes of the *Guide du Bibliophile et du Libraire* (Book lovers and bookseller's guide, 1945-59), at first in the form of a methodical directory (with an ad hoc classification, which, by the way, was not at all bad!) and later in the more classical form of an alphabetic directory.

While with Rombaldi, I created two 'prestigious'

journals: one on bibliophily, *Le Portique* (8 issues, from 1945 to 1951), and one on the theater, *Intermède*, which stopped after the second issue for lack of clients (1946-47).

My association with the CGT's economic studies center resulted in several internal, non-published reports, particularly on the development of workers' purchasing power between the Second Empire and 1950, of which, under the pseudonym Michel Lucenay, I published a modified version under the title *De quelques caractéristiques du capitalisme contemporain* in *Cahiers Int.* 84(1957)p.50-60.

At the request of Mr. Schueller, head of L'Oreal, I wrote for him a fairly thorough study on the probable economic effects of the 'single energy tax' championed by him. This report was not published and must be available in the files left by Mr. Schueller to his daughter, Mrs. Béthencourt.

Of my studies for the Mining Documentation Bureau - one on Soviet oil - was published. It appeared in the journal *Annales des Mines* (in 1956 or 57, I think).

In Milan I prepared a certain number of studies, e.g. on nuclear research in Italy, and a kind of *Review of the French Technical Press* which constituted a selection of summaries on subjects of particular interest to the Italian public. Copies of this documentation bulletin should be available at the Milan House of Technology, which inherited the collections of the French center, and also in the archives of our supervising ministry in France: the one of Economic Affairs.

In 1955 UNESCO had asked me to prepare a study on *Methods Applicable to the Retrospective Research of Scientific Documents*; it was published through the good offices of what was then called the IACDocTerPAS. This study attracted the attention of H.P.Luhn at IBM and of Mortimer Taube. Mr.Luhn then invited me to come to San José to assist at the inauguration of new IBM laboratories in May 1958; the address I delivered on that occasion was published by the *IBM Journal*. Mr. Taube, on his part, had me invited to the International Conference on Scientific Information by the organizers of that event, which was held in Washington in November 1958 under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences; I served there as panel chairman of the session devoted to the comparative study of classification systems.

I had intended to present at and to this ICSI Conference a study on the 'habits and needs' of STI users in France, and to this end I had conducted an enquiry by sending questionnaires to a certain number of research organizations, in particular the CEA (Nuclear Energy Commissariat) and the IFP (French Petroleum Institute). Unfortunately there was no time to complete this enquiry by means of oral interviews and to set forth the results, so that nothing has been published and the records were simply filed.

In 1962 Harold Wooster asked me to prepare a

report on *The Theoretical Basis of Information Retrieval Systems*. It was mimeographed in 1965 and is still available in some 20 copies.

Apart from my reports on missions performed, UNESCO published my *Study of General Categories Applicable to Classification and Coding in Documentation* (1962) both in French and in an English translation; a study on *The Organization of Information systems of Public Authorities* (1978 in French, 1979 in English, 1980 in Spanish) and the *Directory of the Documentation Services of Libraries and Archives in Africa* (bilingual English/French, 2nd ed. 1977), the rewriting of which I directed on the basis of data prepared by D.Zidfouemba, as well as a *Directory of training institutions for librarians, documentalists and archivists*, to which I have no precise reference at hand. The UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries published in 1976 a study by me on *Classification 100 years after Dewey*. Finally, the address I delivered at UNESCO in 1989 at the reception of the IFLA was also published by Unesco in French and in English.

In 1980 Mr. Dedijer, who organized at the OECD Development Center a conference on information systems for the Third World, asked me to present a report at that meeting. This report was published first in mimeographed form in the conference proceedings and later in a volume printed under the direction of Nicolas Jéquier, but I cannot give you the exact data on it now.

At some time, I cannot fix exactly - towards 1963? - I took part in a conference organized by AGARD in Copenhagen to study the needs of users of information systems; my text - in English - was published in the proceedings of that conference.

I have also participated in two conferences on IST problems: one at Cleveland, organized by Allen Kent (1959) and one at the University of Maryland in 1966 on the problem of 'relations' in information retrieval systems. My contributions were printed in the proceedings of these meetings (in the second case in the journal *Information Storage and Retrieval* (now *Information Processing and Management*)).

I further attended two conferences on information science organized by A. Debons within the framework of the NATO conferences, the first one at Seven Springs (USA) in 1972 and the other one at Aberystwith (Wales) in 1975; my contributions were published in the NATO Advanced Study Institutes Series, Leyden: Noordhoff).

It undoubtedly won't be necessary here to recall my reports to the four international conferences on Classification Research, started with Dorking 1957, nor those to the conferences on terminology on which you, Mrs.Dahlberg, have all the references yourself.

The same applies to my paper in the *Festschrift Berwick Sayers* (*Sayers Memorial Volume*), Library Association, 1967.

The *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France* printed several articles and critical reviews by me in the 1960s and 70s and, more recently, in its issue No.6 of 1988.



My research on semantic structures first found expression in oral accounts whose text undoubtedly survives only in notes taken by those listening to them: at the linguistics department of the University of Montreal in 1978 and at the philosophy department of the University of Ottawa in 1978 or 1979. This work was continued within the larger framework of my studies on "glossogenesis" as of 1980-81: the pertinent bibliography is found in my various reports to the annual meetings of the LOS as of 1985 as well as in my addresses at the two conferences organized by Prof. Walter A. Koch at the University of Bochum (in 1986 and 1990, vols. 11 and 27 of the BPX - Bochum Publications in Evolutionary Cultural Semiotics - Collection).

The most important one of these contributions is undoubtedly my report, regarded as the 'basic document', to the meeting of experts organized by UNESCO at Venice in 1983; this report was published under the title 'Au-delà de Babel' (*Beyond Babel*) in the proceedings volume of that conference, which I edited: *La Langue: Identité et Communication*. Paris: UNESCO 1986. But, given the progress of research in this field in the course of the past decade, this report is of course largely outdated by now.

There is still another field in which I have worked for UNESCO: that of 'axiologie comparée' (comparative axiology, the comparative study of so-called cultural values). I prepared the 'basic document' for the meeting of experts organized by UNESCO on this subject in 1984 at Buenos Aires, but it was published only as a 'restricted' document, as the UNESCO project to which it was to have been the introduction was postponed to a later date due to the budgetary restrictions of 1985.

Within the framework of my activities as a 'scientific consultant' to CISS I prepared a certain number of reports which on the whole were mimeographed and distributed only inside this Council, among them the results of an enquiry requested by Unesco on the feasibility of preparing a new International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences; a study on the concepts of the social sciences, another one on the modalities of the university training of higher staff in public administration and industry (which served as basic document for an international conference on this subject, which I organized at INSEAD in Fontainebleau in 1969); a report (for UNESCO) on the information activities of these same organizations, etc. Finally, and maybe above all, I participated actively in the work of COCTA as of the moment this body was recognized as a permanent CISS Committee, and, in the following, in the INTERCOCTA project. But all of this is well known to you, Mrs. Dahlberg.

There are numerous unpublished texts. For example, a start of an autobiography entitled *Patchwork* written 1978. Then, numerous notes entitled *Essai de graphémique* and amounting to an attempt to realize a project of Raymond Queneau: a 'phonological' transcription of spoken French. Also, several versions of a *French Etymological and Semantical Dictionary*, patterned

after the model of Juret's Latin and Sanskrit Dictionaries which I had edited in microfiche form (the microfiches are still available). One version was arranged according to 'formants', another one according to semantic groups. This work was done in the years 1972-77.

Of more recent date is rather voluminous long-range etymological material on such languages as Khoisan, Sumerian, Burushaski, Tiwi (a so-called 'isolated' Australian language), Selknam and Qawasqar (two extinct languages from Tierra del Fuego), and also critical remarks on the "global etymologies" proposed by Bengtson and Ruhlen. All this goes back to 1984-90.

Likewise unpublished were the results of a rather thorough study in the field of bibliometry, stimulated by my reading in 1985 of the 'Anderla Report', prepared and published for the OECD in 1972 (I had taken part in the discussions organized by the OECD for the preparation of this report and later in a debate on the report itself, organized by Mr. J. Michel, at the time director of the Interministerial Mission on Scientific and Technical Information).

On the other hand, the courses given by me at the INTD and at the ESI in Rabat were published (in mimeographed editions) and are now in the archives of these institutions.

My temporary stay at Montreal University resulted in a certain number of studies that were published in the Quebec professional journal *Argus* in 1978-80, and in a few internal reports not to be found in the files of the Ecole de Bibliothéconomie.

*If I am not mistaken you translated into French sometime in 1979 ? the tables of the Broad System of Ordering (BSO), the system which the FID sponsored in the seventies on behalf of UNESCO. Have you also done other translations?*

Oh yes, I started with this already quite early. Between 1933 and 1940 I translated several articles by H.E. Bliss as well as one by Douglas Waples for the *Revue du Livre* and - from the German, with the assistance of Miss Lusternik - W. Hoffmann's report "Introduction to the study of readers" to the ADLP conference. This translation was, however, only typewritten and could not be published.

In 1982 I translated for the "Maison des Sciences de l'Homme" texts by R. Darnton on French 17th-century clandestine literature; this book was published by Gallimard. On the other hand, a translation I prepared in 1983 of P. Laslett's book on the family, for Flammarion, has remained in that publisher's files, as the author did not, in the end, carry out the corrections deemed necessary by him in his text, which had been written a few years before.

*Well, dear Eric, you called Ranganathan a prolific writer, I think the same could be said about you, after all! By the*

way, have you ever received an award for all you have done for society?

I might mention the fact that I have been one of the three winners of the 'Grand Prix de l'Information Scientifique' instituted by the (French) National Center of Scientific Research in 1961, this prize being awarded to me for a project for the organization of STI which I had drafted with the assistance of Calvin Mooers (Boston). This work - which did not have any practical follow-up, nor did the other prize-winning works, by the way - was printed in two editions of the collective work entitled *L'Organisation de la Documentation Scientifique* (Paris: Gauthiers-Villars). But it had, one might say, a certain 'fall-out' in my introduction to the volume on documentation networks published under the direction of R. Guilloux.

Thank you, Eric, for letting us share the many wonderful experiences you must have had in your apparently most adventurous, rich and eventful life! You have been indeed a hard worker in the past 65 years just to be able to keep going, but a creative one too! It is surely strange that so much of your thoughts and writings have never seen the "light of the day".

Now, after having learned of the many activities in which you have been involved we only begin to get an idea what you could have taught us in the relatively few events which brought us together.

We surely hope for many more occasions to have you with us and to hear your opinion and to get your advice concerning the problems which you have mastered throughout your life, and especially regarding the organization of knowledge. Thank you once more for this precious interview!

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#### Editorial Note:

The following bibliography of Eric de Grolier's writings has been compiled partly on the basis of the above "Interview", partly on the basis of the titles cited in vols. 2 and 3 of the *International Classification and Indexing Bibliography (ICIB)*, 1984 and 1985. It is a selected bibliography of those of his works pertaining to classification and terminology.

## Eric de Grolier: Selected Bibliography

01 *Rational organization in the bookstore.*

Tous Les Livres. Paris 1931

02 *Bibliographic classification of H.E. Bliss.*

The Hague: Institut Int. de Bibliographie 1931.

03 *Classification scientifique, classification pratique, classification normalisée.* (Paper presented at the Copenhagen Conference of the Institut Int. de Bibliographie, 1935 - together with Georgette de Grolier)

04 *(Report on classification).* In: Proc. Congrès Mondial de la Documentation 1937.

05 *Le problème de la classification documentaire.* U.F.O.D. La Documentation en France 13(1944)No.1, p.11-21

06 *Etudes sur le problème de la classification documentaire* (Studies on the problem of documentary classification). Paris: Inst. Natl. des Techniques de la Documentation (Ms.) 1952.

07 *Etat présent du problème de la classification documentaire* (Present state of the problem of documentary classification). ABCD (1953)No.9, p.237-246 or 247-251

08 *L'étude des problèmes de classification documentaire sur le plan international* (Study of documentary classification problems on the international level). Rev.Doc. 20(1953)No.3, p.105-117

09 *Analyse et synthèse dans les classifications et codifications documentaires* (Analysis and synthesis in classification systems and documentary codes). In: Int. Conf. Lib. Doc. Centres 3. Bruxelles 1955. Communication 2B. p.102-108

10 *Théorie et pratique des classifications documentaires* (Theory and practice of documentary classification systems). In: Ed. documentaires industrielles et techniques. Paris: Union Franc. Org. Doc. 1956. p.22-32, 297-301

11 *Nouvelles recherches sur la symbolisation des classifications documentaires.* (New research on symbolization in documentary classification) Rev.Doc. 23(1956)p.13-21

12 *Symbolisation normalisée d'une classification encyclopédique internationale.* (Standardized codification of an international encyclopedic classif. syst.). Rev.Doc. 23(1956)4, p.128-139

13 *Concluding survey.* Proc. Int. Study Conf. on Classif. for Inform. Retrieval, Dorking 1957. London: Aslib 1957. p.81-85

14 *Les progrès et l'avenir du "langage classificatoire".* (Progress and future of the classificatory language). Bull. Union Franc. Org. Doc. 26(1958)No.5, p.1-49