THE PREMISES OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

I

Bibliographical Citations

Bibliographies are lists of citations of written records; bibliography is also a study of written records, printed ones in particular. The lists and the study benefit from each other. Both of them use and produce citations.

KNOWLEDGE SURVIVES when it is committed to writing. Bibliography is the art and science of telling readers about written knowledge. The ecology of knowledge relies on bibliography, which usually works best when it works quietly.

Several terms need to be introduced at the outset, although the communities that use them often define them differently for their special needs. CITATIONS are formulations of bibliographical particulars. The term BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RECORDS is both singular and collective, both single citations and organized LISTS of them. The citations may consist of a few words, or they may run to several pages. They may identify writings in general, leaving readers with the task of finding a copy if they wish; or they may identify specific copies. The lists range from handy guides with only a few citations, on up to the multi-volume National Union Catalog and WorldCat online, with millions of citations for general use. The larger the list, generally the greater the need for formal citations. Citation (at the individual level) is usually identical with ENTRY, TITLE (cf. the German Titel), and REFERENCE; list (at the collective level) with BIBLIOGRAPHY, CATALOGUE and INVENTORY. ¹ ENTRY

¹A classic distinction holds that BIBLIOGRAPHIES cite the writings in general, while CATALOGUES are copy-specific; that bibliographies serve the general needs of readers, while catalogues record library holdings; and that bibliographies are self-contained, and fixed in time. Catalogues can be updated; their contents are never final. The distinctions are
is often used as a synonym for **CITATION**, although strictly defined, an entry consists of a citation, formulated to assign it a place in a list, and often an **ANNOTATION** appended with value-added details.

Citations identify both physical objects and the contents of those objects. In literary studies, the word **TEXT**, short and unpretentious, usually refers to constructions of ideas and concepts, intellectual, artistic, political. But “textbooks” are physical objects, and “electronic texts” are accessible through commercial agencies that largely grew out of the book publishing industry. Related terms, like *texture* and *context*, apply to both. In theory, form and content are separable: library cataloguers, for instance, separate **WORKS** and **BOOKS**. In practice, the distinction important as concepts, but the terms are used inconsistently. Bibliographies are often called catalogues and library cataloguers describe their work as bibliographical control. The terminological distinction may get lost, but here it is useful that Chapter III is given over to a survey of bibliographical lists, self-contained published library catalogues among them, while Chapter V summarizes the history of the practice of cataloguing, i.e., the rules for fitting new citations in with earlier ones in library catalogues.

Many alternatives names are used for the self-contained lists (checklists, hand lists, short-title lists, short-title catalogues). They reflect the goals and tastes of compilers more than any consistency that is reflected in terminology.

Of the many writings that address the concept, pride of place belongs to D.F. McKenzie’s Panizzi Lectures, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (British Library, 1999). Richard Smiraglia, thinking as a library cataloguer, is among those who have wrestled with this bear. See The Nature of a “Work”: Implications for the Organization of Knowledge (Scarecrow, 2004). To information theorists, the landmarks include Steven J. DeRose, David G. Durand, Elli Mylonas and Allen H. Renear, “What is Text, Really?” *Journal of Computing in Higher Education, 1* (1989), 3-26; also Renear’s “Representing Text on the Computer. Lessons for and from Philosophy,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 74* (1992), 221-48. Literary scholars, meanwhile, may relish the interpretive conceptions that are suggested by Roland Barthes conception of, through “the sliding overturning of former categories,” the requirement of “a new object,” defined so as to recognize “that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder.” See “The Death of the Author,” *Aspen* (1967), no. 5-6, and *Manteia* (1968), no. 5, and widely reprinted.

Texts and bibliography are intimidating concepts, partly because they deal with but are not to be confused with **INFORMATION**, another intimidating concept that can be teased into being seen as specific but must also forever enjoy a respected alocve in the pantheon of ambiguous virtues along with wisdom, love, truth, and beauty. The vexed relationships between information and bibliography are further discussed on pp. 000.
can create a fault line that may diminish the usefulness of a citation by separating the two. Their interdependence is assumed; a separation mostly weakens and distorts the cause of describing and studying the objects and the contents. In this book, and unless the setting suggests otherwise, the two are assumed to be co-terminal: a text is a physical object to be read and available for rereading, as well as the content of the physical object. Best witness is embodied in best evidence.

In this book, WRITING is synonymous with text; LITERATURES is its plural. BOOK can refer to either the object or its ideas: one buys a physical book, one reads a conceptual book. (The term “information packages” sounds terribly leaden, and “information” assumes more than one can or should be precise about. It also diverts attention from the context, appearance, artistry, and attitude, which bibliographical citations may seek to describe.) As for the term READER, it conveys the essence of the activity better than any of its common alternatives. Consumer, user, customer, client, patron are all laden with connotations. Nor is reading to be ashamed of.

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CITATIONS**

Bibliographical citations are REFERENCES that direct readers to writings. Many references are not bibliographical: they point to objects other than writings. As for bibliographical citations, there are loaded with functions. For instance, they are:

— NAMES, statements internal to the physical item, as stated either explicitly on title pages (so as to say “This is who I am”) or implicitly, as assigned by others (so

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1 The separation, of course, is not unknown. Some amass physical books but never read them (they are the book fools on Sebastian Brandt’s *Narrenschiff*) while others are happy to destroy physical books on grounds that surrogates preserve the content. See further in Chapter IV (pp. 000). In general, readers instinctively assume that a citation covers both objects and content, even if some parts of a citation will apply to the one or the other.

2 Jonathan Rose sums up the argument nicely: “The problem with focusing on texts is that no one can read a text – not until it is incarnated in the material form of a book” (cf. the APHA website, for the 2001 institutional award).

3 I admire Tom McArthur’s *Worlds of Reference: Lexicography, Learning, and Language from the Clay Tablet to the Computer* (Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1986), although his worlds deal with a universe that runs parallel to the worlds of citations described here, but with many intersections. See further p. 30 and passim.
as to say “This is what it is called”). Their textures are the spine labels on Samuel Johnson’s backs of books. Boswell records the Doctor’s sentiments thus:¹

“Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we enquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and at the backs of books in libraries.”

— **Addresses**, i.e., locations in a list or on the shelf, structures built out of the textures of the names. Juxtapositions of names identify or imply contexts and neighborhoods: where goes with what.

— **Entrances**, gateways into texts, also escape hatches, as well as entrapments. They are keys to the gateways of the literatures they cite, keys to rooms where there are more keys, Russian dolls and Chinese boxes;²

— **Abbreviations**, encapsulations, encodings, a kind of tropes to poets and algorithms to scientists, statements that work best when they are (to recall a phrase that is basic to all bibliography) concise but sufficient;

— **Counsel**, endorsements, recommendations, publicity, warnings, so as to make the angels at once moralists and evangelists, advocates, teachers, and tour guides. Mirroring the lexicographers’ distinction between prescriptive and descriptive dictionaries, Patrick Wilson separates the bibliographical “powers” to prescribe and describe.³ His work is a rich exposition of philosophical thought, much to be respected, although ultimately citations are descriptions that prescribe, and prescriptions that describe;

— **Catalysts**, causes of change that do not themselves change. (Cf. p. 37). Like the physical items they cite, their details do not change, although their goal is to

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¹ *Life of Johnson*, April 18, 1776. Dr. Johnson’s idea implies levels: experience, ratified in writings, abstracted in citations.


² They are thus also portals, a conception is reflected in the title of Gerard Ginette’s *Seuils* (Éd. du Seuil, 1987; English tr. as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1997). Ginette uses the conception to explore provocatively many of the interrelationships between the design of the physical book and the experience of reading it.

³ *Two Kinds of Power: An Essay on Bibliographical Control* (Univ. of California Pr., 1988).
attract readers who may reconceive of their content and move their setting to a different address. D.F. McKenzie proposes that:

the rhetorical structures of texts . . . constitute a stable resource from which we confirm the continuities of human experience and extend it in ways most congenial to ourselves. . . . It’s the durability of those textual forms that ultimately secures the continuing future of our past; it’s the evanescence of the new ones that poses the most critical problem for bibliography and any further history dependent upon its scholarship.

McKenzie thus assumes the Pythagorean duality of rest and motion, and recalls the time-honored counsel, “keep your head in the clouds and your feet on the ground.” Joseph A. Dane reflects on the point thus: “The book I hold is not the book you hold, and when I hold this book tomorrow, the historical conditions under which I hold it will have changed.” The bibliographical passion is very physical: it walks on the ground – which, however, is always shifting. The objects and the ideas have been married forever; they are much in love and work best together when the one who can be redefined is here to attend to the one who can’t. (Bibliographers are among those who instinctively grimace when they hear today’s information “power-brokers” refer to creators of texts as “mere content providers.”)

— LIBRARY CATALOGUE ENTRIES, extracted from the great catalogue that records the memory of civilization. Bibliographical lists are virtual libraries, set up to serve communities of readers by providing guidance and contexts. They testify to the faith that builds and sustains institutional libraries and their civilizations;

— MEMORIALS, tributes, celebrations, monuments to the written record and its authors, places of privilege and responsibility in the temples maintained by keepers of sacred flames. Singly their transcriptions are often tributes of devotion and respect; collectively they are canons, pantheons, and hit parades. They enable their

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2The Myth of Print Culture (Univ. of Toronto Pr., 2003).
3In moments of fervor, bibliographers like librarians enjoy recalling Victor Hugo’s stentorian address to the Communard arsonist in L’année terrible (1872): “Une bibliothèque est un acte de foi des générations ténébreuses encore qui rendent dans la nuit témoignage à l’aurore,” i.e., “A library [also a bibliography] is an Act of Faith, on the part of generations yet unborn, who in the night bear witness of the dawn!” Powerful stuff.
texts to be imminent, reflections of Kepler’s faith in a God who would wait five hundred years for an interpreter;

— INDEXES. Collectively in alphabetical, chronological, classified orders, random computers in the unpredictable minds of readers;

— BOREDOM. Bibliographical citations, in their overwhelming profusion, can all too easily be seen not as stimulants to discovery but as scabs of the precious life-blood of master spirits, alms for oblivion, dried blooms from the great intellectual Florilegium, invitations to information overload, Tolstoy’s messages from the deaf man responding to questions that nobody has asked. To Paul Lacroix, bibliography is a vast plain that “produces nothing but potatoes;”

— READING MATTER. “It takes two to make a book, an author and a reader,” Holbrook Jackson proposes. Reading citations is unlike reading the writings they cite. Prose and poetry are read sequentially. Newspapers are too, but rarely cover-to-cover. Bibliographies are read more like maps, scanned first in search of location, and then in search of context. They are a joy to browse by readers who are too tired to think but not too sleepy to learn; fantasies of all the books one would like to read if one had the time and energy.

— finally, the basis of DECISIONS. For readers: should I go to the trouble of finding what is being cited? For compilers: does this title belong in my list? For library cataloguers no decision is involved: the assignment is to catalogue the next book. Cataloguers and bibliographers alike must also decide whether they should trust what they see, and if not, then figure out whether and how to check further.


2 Opinions (Grant Richards, 1922), p. 181.

3 In lists the context is explicit: adjacent entries are hard to avoid noticing. Citations often appear alone. Oral citations fit into the structure of the discourse, online citations imply the setting of the typist’s inquiry. Adjacent entries in a list are gratuitous, but with a sense of place that can be invaluable.

4 When is the best time for this to happen? I wish I knew the answer to this question.
Bibliographical citations are any and all of these, and they take many forms. Their prototypical creators are compilers, who follow established practices in adapting their citations to the characteristics of the literatures and the needs and habits of their readers. Library cataloguers also create bibliographical citations, using formal practices spelled out in rules and codes. Archivists prepare guides, calendars, and finding aids, using citations that describe and control their holdings. Museums use citations in the inventories that record the items in their custody, and the captions that explain their exhibits. Booksellers cite to promote their wares, publishers to announce their imprints, antiquarian dealers to sell their stock, scholars to footnote the sources of their arguments. The legal precedents cited by lawyers to establish the legal precedents are bibliographical, as are the scriptures quoted by preachers in their sermons, as well as anyone who defends an argument by citing a source. It is often hard to separate bibliographical citations from the references that cite objects that are not bibliographical, and sometimes it is not important.

The task of preparing citations is easy to pass off as “merely stenographic,” even when the results earn high respect. God and the devil live side-by-side in their details, and their contexts foster the activities that redefine learning. Contexts that are framed bibliographically all to easily look innocent and objective: they are meant to work. They are loyal dogs, happiest when they have a job to do.\footnote{Seeing them also as adorable cats, whom we love for no reason other than that they are so adorable, may be pushing a point, although pets do see themselves as members of the family and they know that they are correct (even if many of the dog’s jobs do may not really need doing; nor are all cats always adorable).}

Those who create bibliographical citations want them to be useful as long and as widely as possible. Their goals recall two ideals that are basic to this book:
— A motto of the medieval church: \textit{quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus} – forever, everywhere, and for everyone. A bibliography cites writings in hopes of making them available through all time, around the world, and for as many readers as possible.
— S.R. Ranganathan’s Five “Laws” of Library Science:\footnote{Countless essays have analyzed the tablets. Bibliographies of the essays are useful, since none of them can possibly be the same. The original source is Ranganathan’s \textit{The Five Laws of Library Science}, foreword by Sir P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer; intro. by W.C. Berwick Sayers (Madras Library Assn., 1931).} Books are for use, Every reader his/her book, Every book its reader, Save the reader’s time, and The library

\textbf{— S.R. Ranganathan’s Five “Laws” of Library Science:} Books are for use, Every reader his/her book, Every book its reader, Save the reader’s time, and The library
is a growing organism. These are not scientific “laws,” of course, but rather Mosaic Commandments, Articles of Faith for librarians, and for bibliographers too.

Basic to all bibliography are five attributes of citations: (1) They are expressed in a **Medium** of presentation. (2) They reflect the **Authority** of those who create them. (3) Their purpose is to address the needs of **Readers**. Both as citations and as lists, and internally and externally, their components (i.e., both the entries and the lists) have (4) **Texture**, and (5) **Structure**. These attributes – along with the motto of the Church, Ranganathan’s laws, and along with the dualities introduced earlier (form and content, books and works, durability and evanescence, continuity and change, describing and prescribing, reading and consulting, lists and catalogues) – form the basis for tracing and evaluating the practices of bibliography. The mixture and interplay of these five attributes lead to the perspectives of this book.

**Medium**

Bibliographical citations are expressed today in one of three media: oral, written, and electronic. The media are presented on “platforms:” for oral citations the speaker, for written the bibliography or catalogue, for electronic the data base.

The oldest citations are oral. Statements like “ask John,” “talk to Mary,” or “Boccaccio, go to Monte Cassino,” do not cite bibliographical objects, but others like *Lear*, *War and Peace*, *Pope’s Homer*, *Sergeant Pepper*, *Eroica*, *Madison vs. Marbury*, *Matthew 1:18*, *Britannica*, 68.2, *NUC*, and *WorldCat* are implicit but also, to the right listener, precise in their informality. In oral citations, the ideal of “concise but sufficient,” basic to all effective speech and writing, is understood.

Oral citations, it can be argued but never proven, are the most common of the three. Because they are interpersonal, they are probably the most effective. All oral citations are prescriptive and annotated, praised or qualified by the immediacy of eyebrows and tone of voice. Even literacy is not necessary. They are stored in the fallibility of personal memory; their permanence lies in their effects.

Citations need to be in writing if they are to survive. Platforms of written citations need physical space; those of electronic citations can be anywhere, but if not used, they are nowhere, and they require the intermediary of machinery. None

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1 Leporello’s “catalogue aria” from *Don Giovanni* is an oral bibliography with no citations. It is gossipy and nasty, and while it names no names, its totals may be of some prurient interest to the heirs of the great bibliostatistician, Boleslas Iwinski: see Chapter VIII.
of the media has a foolproof system of backups to assure permanence: *ab omnibus* is not the same as *semper*. Whether in printed or electronic forms, permanence is in fact a faith in permanence, and faith is itself far from permanent. Nor is impermanence of objects the same as obsolescence of contents. Evidence can be saved and content read, but only with the evidence at hand.

In each of the three media, citations may be terse or detailed. The number of citations in a list can range from selective to vast and aspiring to be comprehensive. The audience is crucial. Oral lists and collections of oral citations do exist: the world’s walking encyclopedias include bibliographers who can reel off citations like Homeric formulas. (They rarely make good guests at dinner parties.) Alcuin’s rhymed catalogue is their model (see p. 47). Printed citations can range from a few words to extended descriptions of a physical item with discursive annotations, printed lists from a few entries to multi-volume sets. The compiler adjusts the presentation to the audience. Electronic lists are limited only by the capacities of the internet, although electronic citations are typically abbreviated, precisely formulated to serve as wide a general readership as possible subject to the resources of their processing systems. E-mail citations are electronic in form, but they often function like oral citations.

The media have special strengths and weaknesses that need to be understood if they are to be used well. Inevitably, the strengths and weaknesses are argued over tendentiously. Written citations have the advantages of a fixed visual field, and of greater permanence. The library card catalogues of yore were platforms that could be viewed only one entry at a time, although a sense of place was usually easy to find, and often important too; and readers’ fingers could be trained like those of a good card-shark.¹ Many online sources still show only one entry to a screen, so as to give an advantage of context to book catalogues, which may now be either printed or online. Book catalogues are out of date the moment they are printed, however, and consulting them requires mobility, whether across many miles so as to require expensive travel, or across town so as to take time, or across the room so as to call for the cardiovascular activity that is said to enhance the understanding.

¹Nicholson Baker’s naughty little essay on “Discards,” in *The New Yorker*, April 4, 1994, pp. 64-86, may be fading from sight as libraries enjoy dumping their card catalogues. Its passion is perennial, however, as are some of its points. The revised reprint in *The Size of Thought* (Random House, 1996), pp. 125-81, alas, has no illustrations or cartoons, both of which provided contexts that are arguably not really irrelevant.
Oral bibliography was supplanted by but also basic to written and then printed bibliography. Electronic bibliographical citations are still essentially the conceptual offspring of written and oral practices.

**Sources on the Media of Bibliography:** The best-known writings either predict the boundless futures of computers, or lament the decline of printed books. Walter J. Ong, in his focus on imminence, and others on the workings of creativity, suggest the agenda of bibliography, but almost always implicitly.

**Authority**

Who is responsible for conceiving a bibliography; who owns up to the parenthood? Not surprisingly, there are usually two parents. Compilers do the work, but being less divine than the angels at St. Eloi, they usually need sponsors and publishers. (The phrase “born digital” describes obstetric, not procreative activities.)

**Personal Compilers.** Few bibliographers become rich and famous because of their work. Most are happy with their good deeds. A few were fortunate enough to have been born independently wealthy. (One does not begrudge them, considering the other ways they could have used their wealth.) “Professional bibliographers” are rare. Emerson grumbled that colleges provide libraries but “furnish no Professor of Books, and I think no chair is so much wanted.” Experienced academic politicians will counsel that bibliography ought to be delighted to avoid turf wars that would result from departmental status. Bibliographers may be ACADEMICS, or AUTODIDACTS; COLLECTORS, who know and resemble BOOKSELLERS in their passions. They may also be LIBRARIANS, who create bibliographical records in the catalogues of the collections or in finding aids for their readers, or through original scholarship that honors their institutions. Librarians also help compilers as they collect to the interests of their readers and serve as custodians of collections. Catalogue librarians create citations, reference librarians work with the citations.

Behind great bibliographers usually lies a quiet heroism. They read widely, but they know that they must read critically and learn to evaluate quickly,¹ and they

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¹Rarely, however, is their model the librarian who helps General Stumm at the Imperial Library in Robert Musil’s *The Man without Qualities* (Secker & Warburg ed., 1953: see Chapter 100, vol. 2, pp. 191-98; Knopf ed., 1995, p. 500-506). This librarian (a special lecturer in Library Science no less) reads only titles and tables of contents. (“Read more and you are lost: you lose perspective,” he warns.)
complain that they never have enough time. They protest that they don’t really have attitude, and they are often proud of their humility. Zealous and single-minded, they rarely lack imagination, but pedantry often – perhaps necessarily – lies near the surface. Does their labor amount to “true research;” might it not constitute a kind of “citation engineering?” These are questions for academics to play with: helping readers find what they want and need, and thus redefine their thinking, is sufficient virtue, so as to compensate for any lack of royalties. Almost inevitably, some (nameless) bibliographers have been known to be crashing bores.¹ Few have probably been outstanding athletes, but a number have reputedly been gourmet cooks.

They own bibliographies,² even if they do not have time to read everything they describe. Their single-minded great love often makes them vulnerable. Compiling is a heroic effort, a Bildungsroman that rarely leaves them bereft. Elliott Coues proposed that “It takes a sort of inspired idiot to be a good bibliographer, and his inspiration is as dangerous a gift as the appetite of the gambler or dipsomaniac – it grows with what it feeds upon, and finally possesses its victim like any other invincible vice.”³ Charles Evans, after an unhappy career as a librarian, somehow supported a family while he prepared the monumental American Bibliography;⁴ there are surely many other such tales that deserve to be celebrated. Francesco Marucelli (1625-1703) is remembered for what may be the largest one-person list, the Mare magnum, a great ocean of 111 volumes (!) of hand-written citations that he copied out under broad subjects.⁵ Robert Proctor is among the bibliographers who lost his

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¹I cherish discussions with other admirers of Anthony Powell’s “Dance to the Music of Time” that have led to awards for honors of being “the Widmerpool of Bibliography.” The prizewinners must be unnamed.

²At or near the top of any list of collector-bibliographers must go the name of Sir William Osler, compiler of the Bibliotheca Osleriana (Clarendon Pr., 1929), whose collection is now at McGill Univ. in Montreal. See Philip M. Teigen, Books, Manuscripts, and the History of Medicine (Science History Publications, 1972). There are countless other heroes.

³The Osprey, November 1897, quoted by Richard H. Shoemaker in Library Trends, 15 (1947), 347. Coues was the compiler of a Bibliography of Ornithology (1880).

⁴Edward G. Holley, Charles Evans, American Bibliographer (Univ. of Illinois Pr., 1961).

⁵Ilaria Pescini, Dal mare magnum dell’abate Marucelli: la più antica bibliografia di storia postale (Istituto di studi storici postali, Prato, 1993). Angelo Maria Bandini issued an Elegio for
sight, although many others (analytical bibliographers most often) are accused of being blind. ¹ Jacob Schwartz dedicated one of his works “to the bibliographer who insured himself against going mad.”² Few legends can surpass the long-term diligence of the three generations of the Estreichers, librarians in Krakow, who assembled the monumental *Bibliografia polska*.

Most bibliographers are preoccupied with their work, but several have major outside interests. Theodore Besterman was an expert in parapsychology and an Enlightenment scholar. (He once owned Voltaire’s home in Vernay.) Less well known is Fredson Bowers the jazz critic and breeder of Irish wolfhounds. I should like to have met several curious bibliographers: the Rev. Henry Cotton (1789-1879),³ who recorded the annals of the first printing presses from around the world while he was curate in the Irish village of Tipperary; the early San Francisco bookseller Anton Roman,⁴ who reprinted in his shop catalogue an 1814 essay on bibliography by Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne; Father Patrick O’Reilly, bibliographer of Micronesia. Many are irascibly brilliant, the late Robin C. Alston being among those I have known and respected. Many are quiet monomaniacs, among them Allan Stevenson, the great watermark scholar. A few have been conspicuously flamboyant, Douglas C. McMurtrie among them. Among those I

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¹This is because I have not known as many bibliographers as I should have liked: the list of blinded bibliographers is probably a long one. I have known only one bibliographer who did his work when he was blind, James J. Barnes, author of valued studies of Anglo-American copyright history and translations of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* – works that are arguably more cultural history than bibliography.

²*1100 Obscure Points: The Bibliographies of 25 English and 21 American Authors* (Ulysses Bookshop, 1931). See William S. Brockman, “Jacob Schwartz, ‘The Fly in the Honey’,” *Joyce Studies Annual*, 9 (1998), 174-190. Eccentricity may not be in the bibliographer’s job description, but if it is not congenital it can be and is and perhaps should be cultivated.

³*A Typographical Gazeteer* (1825, 1831-66 – the date span between the two volumes of the second edition has to conceal a story). Cotton’s clerical duties, it may be noted, also gave him time to compile a list of English editions of the Bible, 1505-1850 (“with an appendix containing specimens of translations, and bibliographical descriptions;” 1852), a historical directory of the Irish church; also a number of religious tracts.

⁴Reprinted with an essay by Robert D. Harlan as *Anton Roman’s Sketch of Bibliography* (Zamarano, Roxburghe Clubs, 1986).
highly respect but am glad to have avoided on bad days, honors may go to the formidable Theodore Besterman. Near the top of a long list of those I admire for his personal history is A.W. Pollard.

Almost all compilers have been men. (So is anyone surprised?) Someday the Tchenmerzine Society will be founded, devoted to couples whose husbands (like the retired officer Avenir) lay claim to work done mainly by their wives (like the brilliant Stephane).\(^1\) Work by women began to appear about a century ago in the anonymity of library cataloging. The role of gender in bibliography remains to be studied. It notably includes the innuendoes of old-goat scholar-collectors (one associates them with nineteenth-century French bibliophiles). For them, compilers and librarians were castrates, whose duty was to enable readers (gentlemen) to enjoy literatures (female), but never dare to enjoy the pleasures themselves.\(^2\)

There are also bibliographers who punch time-clocks. Herman Melville’s “sub-sub librarians,” who at the bidding of their employers work in “the long Vaticans and street-stalls of the earth.” Some bibliographers are unhappy people, but rarely because they were ashamed of their efforts, although most of them later agonize over their inevitable fallabilities.

\[\textbf{Sources on Bibliographers}: \text{The literature inevitably intermixes, in varying degrees, lives and works, biography and criticism. I know of no bibliography of biographies of compilers. The most respected Pantheon, Breslauer-Folter, covers the heroes. Major biographies are cited throughout Tanselle’s “Bibliographical History as a Field of Study” (1988); see also his Intro, pp. 48-70. Archer Taylor, always the good folklorist, interspersed many of the legends in his many writings.} \]

Among the notable biographies of compilers are Sarah Elizabeth Roberts, \textit{José Toribio Medina, His Life and Works} (Wilson, 1941); Paul Needham’s tribute to Martin Boghardt, in Boghardt’s \textit{Archäologie des gedruckten Buches} (Harrassowitz, 2008, pp. 9-22), is a splendid analysis of bibliographical work that brings a scholar to life. Donald C. Dickinson’s \textit{John Carter: The Taste and Technique of a Book Collector} (Oak Knoll, 2004) suggests how bibliography and bibliophily complement each other.

Scarecrow Press’s “Great Bibliographers” series, which reprints major writings but also includes biographies (many of them perfunctory): 1. John Philip Immroth, \textit{Ronald}...

\(^1\) Her/their great work is the \textit{Bibliographie d’éditions originales et rares d’auteurs français des XVe, XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles} (1927-33).

\(^2\) In Gustave Mouravit, \textit{Le livre et la petite bibliothèque d’amateur} (1869), pp. 62-63, Charles Nodier is quoted thus: “une bibliothèque de luxe est la baren des viellards. Soit! Pouvoir que les trésors qu’on y rassemble ne sont pas possédés pas des eunuques.”

Bibliographers may envy their indexer friends for Hazel K. Bell’s *From Flock Beds to Professionalism: A History of Index-Makers* (HKB Press, Oak Knoll, 2008).

Booksellers’ biographies and especially their autobiographies – too numerous to list here and too dangerous to select from – are also a special delight.

It is fascinating to browse the anthology of portraits of bibliographers in the *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens* (Hiersemann, 1935, vol. 3, pp. 000.

Writings on the concept of authorship, sadly, rarely mention bibliographers.

**SPONSORS.** The authority of a bibliography rests mostly on the work of its compilers, but publishers are needed to issue, promote, and distribute their work and pay the bills. Institutions often see bibliographies as part of their mission, whether commercial (booktrade lists), scholarly (subject lists), political (national bibliographies, celebratory lists), religious (missionaries’, church historians’, inquisition lists), or libraries (lists of their special treasures or in areas of special demand). Large commercial publishers rarely issue bibliographies; market demand is limited, and extensive lists are often editorially too complicated. Small firms, however, often make a specialty of them. Editors of scholarly journals insist on bibliographical accuracy in their prose texts, but bibliographical lists are rarely allowed in their back yards. Online venture capitalists are often attracted to megalists, the more greedy the lists in scope, usually the more lucrative.
Who ultimately should take credit for bibliographical work? The sponsors usually lay claim to the large conceptions, however flawed and limited; the compilers are blamed for the flaws, however trivial, or praised for their diligence. The minute detail and high quality of most bibliographical work can too often lead to the sad (and generally incorrect) assumption that all bibliographers are sub-sub-librarians.

READERS

Readers, in their search for facts, causes, or entertainment, are of many kinds. John Denham separated four ends in reading (wisdom, piety, delight, and use), Coleridge four classes of readers (sponges, sand-glasses, strain-bags, mogul diamonds), C.C. Colton three purposes of reading (thinking, writing, talking – these being, respectively, rare, common, and the great majority), Chesterton those who want to get to the end from those who wish the reading would never end. Francis Bacon distinguished still others in his celebrated essay, “Of Study” (1625). Some read to find answers, others to ask questions. The prospect of changing the former into the latter is of course what bibliographers, like teachers, ought to dream about. “Writing is a skill, reading a faculty.” Steven Roger Fischer proposes. “Writing is expression, reading impression. Writing is public, reading personal. Writing is limited, reading open-ended. Writing freezes the moment. Reading is forever.”

Citation is still an act of faith: readers may or may not exist now, but someday they will. Bibliographers need to dream of sending Boccaccio to Monte Cassino, and plan their work with this goal in mind. Some lists give the impression of being exercises in solipsism, meant for the compilers only rather than for readers. Others remember the salesman’s slogan, “keep close to the customer,” as they try to guess who their readers will be, and what will be sufficient to their needs; but they also know not to patronize their readers. They often guess wrong, and readers who fail to find what they want blame the compilers (“precious” is a favorite expletive).

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1 <The three goals reflect St. Augustine’s conception of the basic motivations: to educate, invoke, and to entertain [etc etc. Source?]. more>

2 The list of twelve functions on pp. 11-15 above suggests some of the possible outcomes that readers may or may not start out with, or end up with.

Even when readers are sedentary their minds are mobile: thus, of Ranganathan’s Laws of Library Science, the Fourth ("save the reader’s time") is clearly the most problematic of the five.¹

Books aspire to being permanent artifacts, but most readers are after the texts. Citations confirm for them the position of physical objects (pace Heisenberg), but their goal is to seek to create the intellectual momentum that will relocate the position of the text, and perhaps of the physical item or the citation in the world of learning. The momentum is what lies behind Borges’ faith in his universal library.

Readers often express their respect for bibliographies, or address their flaws or obsolescence, by becoming compilers themselves.

> **SOURCES ON READING.** Niccolo Machiavelli, Emily Dickinson, Henry Miller, Virginia Woolf, and Walter Benjamin are among the many authors who have exalted in their experience as readers in separate essays. Countless writings praise the joys of reading; their enthusiasm may not always wear well with readers who do not need the message. I like the discursive structure of Alberto Manguel’s *A History of Reading* (Viking, 1996). The favorite quotations are often anthologized in treasuries, from Alexander Ireland’s ancient *The Book Lover’s Enchiridion* (1882) to J. Kevin Graffagnino’s recent *Only in Books* (Madison House, 1996).

A recent wealth of analytical scholarship comes from many specialties. Those who delight in the early chapters of Jackson’s *Anatomy* will be lost in the psychological studies of the perception of reading matter, and vice versa. For a perceptive cross section of important studies, perceptively introduced, see Shafquat Towheed, Rosalind Crone, and Katie Halsey, *The History of Reading* (Routledge, 2011). I also much admire Leah Price’s “Reading: The State of the Discipline,” *Book History*, 7 (2004): 303-20. “User studies,” an important specialty in information science, is based mainly on social science research. Bibliographies figure in this world only peripherally. H. R. Simon’s July 1973 issue of *Library Trends* (“Analysis of Bibliographies;” vol. 22, no. 1) tries to define a topic that may forever resist being defined, but provides perspectives on why.

Both individual citations and bibliographical lists are conceived in texture and in structure. The texture is what readers see, the structure is where they see it, and the two are interrelated. The texture of a citation is made up of elements, selected

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¹“The best way to kill bibliographical scholarship," one writer has proposed, “is to persuade readers that citations that fail to expose bibliographical details still tell them all that they need to know.”
and structurally formulated to become entries in lists; the texture of a list is its scope, the structure its orderings of its entries, i.e.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citations</th>
<th>Textue</th>
<th>Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Entries, Built out of Elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>Units of Scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Lists, Built out of Entries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Printed lists are presented in linear order and complemented by indexes and other amenities. The structure of online lists is usually built into the program, visible to the reader only in the entries it is programmed to display, manifest only as the list is used. In libraries, cataloguing deals with textures, classification with the structures that organize both the entries in the catalogue and the books on the shelf.

**CITATIONS: TEXTURES AND STRUCTURES**

The object being cited asks: what am I? Paul Dunkin answers: “Bibliography can be useful only if the bibliographer can tell other people what his study has taught him. . . . Without the telling, bibliography is the flower born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air.” He asks: “Tells what other people?” And he replies, “The answer decides the language of the telling.”¹ (A point to remember).

But were not many, perhaps most of the world’s written or electronic citations prepared in very vague hopes that anyone would ever be listening? The language of the telling is crucial; it is the very essence of bibliographical citation. Oral citations are casual because further dialogue can clarify the details. Written citations can also be somewhat informal when the audience is known. Their styles can be tailored to the contexts of the materials and the expertise and tastes of the readers when they are known. When unknown general readers are expected – as is usually the case, and the character of the material being cited notwithstanding – formal citation practices are needed, varying in detail and following cataloguing codes (discussed in Chapter V) or style manuals (Chapter VI).² Concise but sufficient remains the

¹*Bibliography: Tiger or Fat Cat?* (Archon, 1975), p. 11.
²Formal citation systems – the early ones the work of imposing heroes (or monomaniacs), the recent one the work of politically powerful committees – depend on consensus. They argue on the basis of epistemological logic, and of concerns for the perceptual needs and community values of the readers, also in recent years of cost accountability. They dream of incorporating *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* and Ranganathan’s laws. Since God
ideal. Even formal systems, however, often provide for shorter or fuller citations within their larger frameworks.¹ (“Granularity,” today’s fashionable word, applies to the detail but often also by inference to the readers.)

Citations describe either entities or their parts, at either a MONOGRAPHIC level (books, serials or periodicals, anthologies, atlases), or an ANALYTIC level (articles in a serial or periodical, chapters in a book, poems in an anthology, maps in an atlas, hymns in a hymnal).² All bibliographical lists assume the distinction (library cataloguing practices, for instance, generally exclude most analytics, in deference to periodical and other specialized indexes), although many bibliographies have found reasons to stretch the point for interesting writings.

→ SOURCES ON BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEXTURE AND STYLE. B.A.M., pp. 41-68, discusses the compiler’s decisions. A.M. Lewin Robinson’s Systematic Bibliography (1963; 4th ed., Bingley, 1979) also covers the topic and includes a list of major writings (pp. 161-81). Their notable successor is the summary ALA Guidelines for the Preparation of a Bibliography (1992, revised 2001, online). The discussion of elements in Gérard Genette, Seuils (1997) is provocative; so too but more briefly in its funky cousin, Kevin Jackson’s Invisible Forms (St. Martin’s, 2000).

ELEMENTS. In texture, citations are made up of elements, which function like a journalist’s checklist for news stories – who, what, where, and when, avoiding but

and the devil lie in their details, anarchy and entropy are the concerns of their creators as well as their readers, both of whom need to be at once both probing and credulous.

¹Many library catalogues intermix entries of different levels of completeness or detail, often because of tight budgets, often in the interests of efficiency, or often simply to cut corners. These three factors can be easily confused, since all libraries take pride in their high standards. The practice of intermixing was openly addressed as early as 1906, in Falconer Madan’s concept of “degressive bibliography”: see p. 000 (the original application being his Bodleian Library catalogues), but also p. 000. The degressive principle is now the province mostly of descriptive bibliographers, but its practices pervade library cataloguing, and are also implicit in most informal citations.

²To my knowledge, the history of the concept of bibliographical levels has never been written. The concept may be too obvious. Many seventeenth-century periodical indexes assume it. The 1974 UNISIST Reference Manual for Machine-Readable Bibliographic Descriptions is said to be a crucial document in the recent history. Library cataloguing practice mostly excludes analytics, except under conditions that are spelled out in specific rules.

In theory there is also a COLLECTIVE level for groups of monographs, i.e., Modern Library, Wagner’s Ring cycle, Anthony Powell’s “Dance to the Music of Time.”
often implying why.¹ “Without the telling,” to Duncan, bibliography is unseen and “wasted in the desert.” The telling consists of elements. Their formulation will vary with the medium, the materials, and the intended readers. Oral citations, wasted when the audience is not listening, are informal and negotiated in the telling. Written citations require well-chosen terms in their telling, and the larger the list, the more formal its terms. Electronic citations, especially in vast data bases, usually demand greater formality.

Formality means establishing name forms, in the cause of historical accuracy, which scholars respect, and position, which large lists demand. Accuracy calls for a time-consuming examination of sources, and it often ends in extended discourse and ambiguity; position calls for adherence to rules imposed by the overall conception of a bibliographical structure. In library cataloguing, **AUTHORITY CONTROL** provides arbitrary decisions that resolve the ambiguities in the interest of the formal system. Readers naturally want their citations concise but sufficient, but they need to understand that what they get is what they see.

The most important elements are:

—AUTHORITY. Two parties are involved in creating the works cited: the author who creates the textual content, and the publisher who creates the physical object

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¹The phrase “data elements” is redundant, but “data fields” can be useful. The concept of elements is basic, but to my knowledge its history has never been assembled. Wendel (p. 43 below) makes a case for compilers in antiquity thinking in terms of elements. For recent events, during the formative period of computer applications, see Thomas Haigh, “‘A Veritable Bucket of Facts:’ Origins of the Data Base Management System,” ACM SIGMOD Record 35:2 (June 2006).

Collectively, the elements are today often conceived as **DATA**, often with the grammatical plural slipping into the singular. Data are often manipulated in systems as **METADATA**, a term also derived from the Greek (literally, above and beyond), which has flourished in the wake of computerization in general and Douglas Hofstadter’s *Gödel, Escher, Bach* (1979) in particular, in order to take a debate or analysis to a higher level of abstraction. If the term *metadata* often embodies elements of gamesmanship (“I dare you to guess what we are really talking about”), it also recognizes the abstractions that are implicit in bibliographical citations, and proposes that their component elements are useful to separate according to function, i.e., as personal names, titles, dates, cities, or as subjects. For library cataloguing usage see p. [158]. Because a vast quantity of data is often involved, *metadata* are commonly conflated with *megadata*, i.e., “big data,” evoking giant supermarkets rather than small retailers, often so as to diffuse the authority behind the description.
(discussed below under **IMPRINT**). The author is usually cited first,\(^1\) honored as the **MAIN ENTRY**. Authors, however solitary, address their readers in part through their publishers. Most writings are the result of negotiations, between authors and publishers as well as – in varying and rarely knowable degrees – advisors, reviewers, editors, censors, patrons, designers, printers, illustrators, and binders.\(^2\) Some authors opt to be anonymous, or hide behind pseudonyms. The range of relationships is endless, and citation practices and cataloging rules become necessary, arbitrary and often even obfuscating.\(^3\)

—**TITLE**. Readers look for titles, implicit or explicit, imaginative or logical, descriptive or prescriptive, assigned by the authors or later readers. “Names of books,” Kantorowicz proposed, “like many other things, reflect the intellectual disposition of an age . . . , a temperament and rhythm of life. . . . The history of book titles, most likely, will never be written, interesting though this chapter of cultural history might be.”\(^7\) The interesting history, however, has many chapters, rarely important but often fascinating. Many early titles (*Di viris illustribus*, *Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales*, even *Bible*) were devised by readers: their stories are legends. With the invention of printing, titles began to be assigned by authors and publishers, who have been responsible for fashions of obsequiousness, verbosity,

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\(^1\) There are exceptions. Book reviews often begin with the title rather than the author’s name. In antiquarian catalogues, a subject heading often comes first in order to call the item to the attention of particular customers. The “non-book genres” call for many special practices: see below.


\(^3\) Gilbert wrote the words, Sullivan the music; but who gets the entry; how much of the book needs to be music, and how does one compare and separate the two? When are commentaries on Aristotle extensive or important enough to merit entry under the commentator’s name? (Authors who have never heard of Aristotle are usually easier to deal with.)

candor, wit, dull honesty, and presumptuous charm. Popular works often acquire nicknames. Library cataloguers learn to be grateful that their codes often make their decisions for them.

—IMPRINT. The content is the responsibility of the author, the physical object of the publisher. The relationship, however rich and complicated prior to the appearance in print, in very rarely reflected in bibliographical practice: the publisher’s city and year of publication are sufficient.

The modern concept of publishing was the by-product of the rise of the book trade, fostered by the invention of the printing press. Over the years it developed into the complex sequence of designers, compositors, pressmen, as well as others who supply or complement them, i.e., typographers, paper makers, illustrators, and binders. The contribution of any of them may be important enough to deserve to be recognized in a citation, but typically the only one who is named is the publisher, who coordinates the others.

1Writings about titles are anecdotal, philosophical, bibliographical, or historical, variously mixed. The anecdotal group includes works like John Hollander, “Haddocks’ Eyes: A Note on the Theory of Titles,” in his Vision and Resonance (Yale Univ, Pr., 1975), pp. 212-26; Leo H. Hoek, La marque du titre: Dispositifs sémiotiques d’une pratique textuelle (Mouton, 1981); and, for the legends of recent major literary works for general readers, André Bernard, Now All We Need is a Title (Norton, 1995). Readers may also enjoy Russell Ash and Brian Lake’s clever but rather pointless anthology of titles, Bizarre Books (St Martin, 1985, and later eds.). The philosophers’ writings, like John Fisher’s “Entitling,” Critical Inquiry, 11 (1984), 286-99; or many by W. V. Quine, lie mostly below the surface of bibliographical pragmatics, Bibliographers are more familiar with the writings of colleagues, such as A.W. Pollard, Last Words on the History of the Title-Page (1891; revised as An Essay on Colophons, Caxton Club, 1905); Ralph Samuel, “Four Centuries of Book Titles; or What Price Glory,” The Colophon, 8 (1931); and Margaret M. Smith, The Title-Page, its Early Development, 1460-1510 (British Library, 2000). Library cataloguers should know Seymour Lubetsky’s “Titles: Fifth Column of the Catalogue,” Lib. Quarterly, 11 (1941).

In Through the Looking Glass, as library cataloguers have long delighted in remembering, the White Knight told Alice that the name of his song was called “Haddock’s Eyes,” but the name really was “The Aged Aged Man,” the song was called “Ways and Means,” the song really was “A-sitting on a Gate,” and the tune was his own invention.

2The literature on personal names is oriented toward modern Western Europe. For some contexts relating to the rest of the world, see Christian Bromberger, “Pour une analyse anthropologique des noms de personne,” Languages, 66 (1982), 103-24, and the essays in L’Écriture du nom propre, ed. by Anne-Marie Christi (L’Harmattan, 1995).
For the analytic level (parts of larger units, like periodical articles), the name of a periodical, with volume, year, and pages, usually replaces the publisher’s name.

LOCATION. Bibliographical citations are quintessentially “title-specific” rather than “copy-specific.” They report only that writings exist: readers are on their own to find copies. Library catalogues are “copy-specific:” they provide call numbers or shelf marks. Union catalogues are too, in that they name the repositories that hold copies, often through abbreviated sigla. Many electronic lists go one step further and link citations to surrogate digitizations. They are copy-specific in that they lead to the surrogate, even if they do not always locate a specific copy that was digitized.

Citations are often amplified with locations of copies in libraries or with references to other lists. Most library catalogues record their own call numbers but, almost militantly, usually feel honor-bound to give no references to other citations. (“We have done our own work and we stand behind it.”) Antiquarian booksellers, knowing that the customers they most admire will double-check the entries in respected bibliographies and library catalogues, oblige them by recording their source work. They know that bibliographies build scholarly communities.

1The story of library sigla is usually one of improvisation in the interests of brevity and clarity, if not politics. The Deutscher Gesamtkatalog of the 1930s used numbers. (Major libraries got the low ones, and the stories behind the competition beforehand, and the sore feelings afterward, can only be imagined). In Great Britain, L, O, and C were usually the British Museum (London), Bodleian (Oxford), and Cambridge University Library. Rank has its privileges, in a system extended to other countries in the great Short Title Catalogues. The United States officially follows a system first devised for the National Union Catalog by Douglas C. McMurtrie, arranged by the states. International sigla are occasionally based on the DSIT (Distinguishing Signs of Vehicles in International Traffic for automobile license plates, ISO 3166-1).

2Many abbreviated forms are obvious to specialist readers (STC, NUC, Evans, VD-16, Thieme-Becker). For cataloguers, Peter VanWingen prepared a list of Standard Citation Forms for Published Bibliographies and Catalogs used in Rare Book Cataloging (Library of Congress, 1982, 1996), compatible with the cataloguing standards of the day. Official committees within the cataloguing world were involved, so the abbreviations seem more prolix and counterintuitive than those used casually by scholars and antiquarian dealers. It is still a convenient list of the major sources that users of citations should know. The online revision (2015) is more one of citing sources than of prescribing abbreviations.

The era of specified locations supplants the era when exact shelf locations were known only by memory. It survives today is special locations that allow respected users to place books where they need them. Owners and reference librarians still often know that their
Scrupulous compilers cite only those items that they have personally performed an **autopsy** on. This may seem to be a routine verification of externals, something established scholars may presume to omit or relegate to their assistants (who serve as what in dog shows is called the “clean-up crew.”) In fact, autopsy, as performed seriously, will involve the examination of the physical item, using the technologies of analytical bibliography, as discussed in Chapter IV below, to be sure that the right text is being cited. Pressured to save money and cut corners, however, libraries commonly resort to “copy cataloguing” by using convenient sources that rarely record differences in details. Is autopsy important? Casual readers are assumed not to care about variants, but anyone who cites a work ought to be presumed to have actually handled the item, at least in an electronic surrogate. Scholars and editors, on the other hand, need to know the world of analytical bibliography. This field, however, has not stood still. Scientists are always expanding their frontiers, here by studying ink, paper stock, and other physical materials, as well as collateral evidence. The frontier is for experts, but observant general readers still notice physical details that affect their experience of the text, and may occasionally even uncover unknown textual variants.

—**CONTENT**, i.e., the message, at once intellectual, artistic, and functional, implicit or explicit, intended or perceived. Throughout this book inevitably runs a mixture of admiration and pity for subject indexers, whose simplistic assignment is to record obvious terms, but whose essential assignment is to record the hints that will help readers guess whether they do or do not need to go to the trouble of examining the item. One admires the learning that needs to go into their work. It is too bad that the indexer will never know what readers will bring to the citation, or how the subject will redefine itself in the future so as to make the headings they assign look quaint.

Can titles be used as subject headings? Indexers would like to hope so: their work would be simpler. But titles are fixed, subjects are fluid. Scientific titles are usually explicit: their subjects are embedded in them, so long as one remembers the date in rapidly changing fields. The gods, however, are mischievous in dealing with favorite works are not where the call numbers specify, but on the third shelf in a green binding. Their archetype is the legendary Florentine goldsmith, bibliophile, and Medici librarian Antonio Magliabechi (1663-1714), whose entire lifetime was spent within a few miles of Florence but who, in correspondence with colleagues in Constantinople, was able to specify not only a source but also its exact shelf location.
evocative titles. They recall Thomas De Quincey’s distinction (in “The Poetry of Alexander Pope,” 1848) between the literature of knowledge (which teaches “discursive understanding”) and the literature of power (which motivates, “through affections of pleasure and sympathy . . . with truth”). Belles lettres and political writings need evocative and engaging titles. Common Sense is not about instinct, A Farewell to Arms has nothing to do with surgery.

—PHYSICAL FORM, i.e., the size, character, and extent of the item, also often its special features. Oral citations often help readers by describing physical forms casually (tall, fat, heavy, green, falling apart). Written and electronic citations are usually more precise and less visceral. The intended readership determines the appropriate detail. General readers like to know the number of pages but usually need little more; scholars often need to be analytical bibliographers and ask how particular copies were assembled.

—ANNOTATIONS. Formal systems (like most cataloguing codes) assume the citation to be sufficient. Readers, however, often benefit from the “value-added” particulars in prose that may not fit the proscribed form. They delight in and benefit from descriptive and historical notes. Viewers at exhibits need to know what is important about what they are seeing. New books are sold with the help of snippet endorsements, antiquarian books with scholarly particulars that justify the stated price. Potential purchasers use booksellers’ catalogues to tell them why they might want to own an item, also the price and why it is justified. “Concise but sufficient” is trumped by the compiler’s belief that readers will benefit from knowing odd but important particulars.

Abstracts are essentially expanded annotations, often following formulary practices. Annotations are also collected into bibliographical essays. (The present book, among other things, can be seen as an expanded bibliographical essay on the concept of bibliographies.)

ENTRIES, BUILT OUT OF ELEMENTS. Speakers typically begin oral citations with the element that they think listeners are most interested in, stated informally in a way that the listener will recognize. Further dialogue can clarify details. Formal written and online, citations proceed in a fixed order, with the main entry first unless there are reasons to the contrary.
LISTS: TEXTURES AND STRUCTURES

UNITIES OF SCOPE. Bibliographical lists require “some guiding principle.”¹ (the phrase is Greg’s; Bowers speaks of “a unifying purpose”). The list needs to be about something that readers want, and which compilers provide. Citations are expected to cohere around a discrete and convincing segment of the infinity of knowledge. The general TOPIC, is the special interest of the compiler and the expected audience of readers. It is broad in conception, then delimited in SCOPE. The basic delimitations are in:

— TIME, i.e., works published within given dates, usually rounded by decade or century or framed by notable historical events. Compilers define their interests historically, and expect their readers to do so too. Library use patterns suggest that new materials are asked for more often than older ones: in today’s Battle of the Books, the moderns overpower the ancients. Bibliographers instinctively pay respect to cultural heritages, but libraries, in today’s commerce-driven settings, recall a hopelessly hazy but supposedly irrevocable “half-life of knowledge” so as to justify the discard of older materials on grounds of obsolescence.³

— PLACE, i.e., works created or published in or dealing within a specific geographic location. The area is usually geographical, but it can also be linguistic, social, or religious, or several of these. Civic pride and local industry further reflect economic needs and political agenda, in “national literatures” and “patrimonies” that honor cultural heritages. When the boundaries are fixed and understood, the distinctions work. Exclusion is implied: writings are out of scope from across the border, in a foreign language, or written by outsiders.

— SUBJECT, the common delimitation of bibliographies and reason why many of them exist: the great love of subject specialists, which often requires a commitment that leads the to believe that their subjects are quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab


omnibus. Over time they are useful in the scholarship, as recorded in new bibliographies that define and redefine the subject.

— GENRE, i.e., works in distinctive physical forms. Actually, many genres are both form (printed books, manuscripts, sound recordings, audio-visual materials) and content (epic poetry, Jesuit tracts, Indian captivity narratives, Revolutionary pamphlets, dime novels, Shakespeare quartos). The form and the content, the medium and the message, go together: functions determine form, as forms are defined and redefined by the functions they serve.

LISTS, BUILT OUT OF ENTRIES. Bibliographical citations, formulated in textures, are organized in structures, provide contexts so as to imply a setting of citations in the world of knowledge. Who are the neighbors? What came earlier and what came next (i.e., what is the historia litteraria)? In subject lists, what else covers the same subject, but in ways that are different, and how? Greg’s “guiding principles” apply to the structures as well as scope. The creative work of planning bibliographical structures is pleasant and rewarding, but it is also a responsibility; the resulting structures fix entries in contexts that readers are told to accept.

What principles underlie the structures of lists? In 1909, A.W. Pollard spelled out the considerations for arranging entries: the sequences should be INTELLIGIBLE (the system should be obvious and convincing in explaining itself), VISIBLE (the sequences should catch the eye), CERTAIN and PERMANENT (arrangements “to be permanently satisfactory must rest on facts definitely ascertained, and not liable to be upset”). His injunctions set forth the ideal practices for printed bibliographies and serve as useful guidelines, subject to may special qualifications, for online bibliographical services. Their linear orders are, like Flavio Orsini’s arsenal of a library, “ranged on the shelves with a mighty show,” to be saluted and introduced.

Pollard was working a hundred years ago, when permanence meant paper, when obsolescence of subject matter was not taken seriously, and when online

See also the discussion of layout on pp. 000 below.

1The point is implicit in the title of Bernard Palmer’s perceptive Itself an Education: Six Lectures on Classification. (Library Association, 1962).


3See Charles and Mary Augusta Elton, The Great Book Collectors (1893), p. 159.
The bibliography was unborn. Intelligibility and certainty were for readers to figure out and learn from: they were meant specifically for Pollard’s learned scholars at the British Museum, who could be assumed to know, or figure out, or be told what they were looking for. Today, visibility is more important with lists that are larger and more complex and the rules for organizing their citations more intricate. Readers are more varied, and probably more impatient when they need to play guessing games with compilers and cataloguers (“I need to find an entry, where are you hiding it?”). Pollard’s counsel is worth remembering, even in our vastly different world.

What are the options for organizing entries? In practice, there are three basic sequences: ALPHABETICAL, whether by name, title, subject, or, in library dictionary-catalogues, all of them; CHRONOLOGICAL, usually by the year of publication (thus ANNALISTIC), and proceeding either from the oldest to the latest or the latest to the oldest (“reverse chronological”); and CLASSIFIED, or SYSTEMATIC (Pollard calls them “logical”), most often by subject. All three have advantages and weaknesses. The alphabet is convenient for entering and searching. It is also neutral in its ignorance: there is no logic behind the sequence of characters in names and words. Chronology lays out the subject’s historia literaria and serves those who study the genealogy of ideas, but writings undated or issued over a span of years fit in badly unless later editions can be connected to the earlier ones. The dates are understood to be those of the publisher’s imprints, and not necessarily those of the printing or the content.

Systematic arrangements organize citations in categories, which in turn may consist of alphabetical or chronological listings or may in turn be sub-divided into finer categories. Geographical arrangements are essentially systematic, involving categories that may be either political, linguistic, or cultural. The most common systems of categories are by subject; and, thanks to the growth and evolution of knowledge, they are inherently obsolescent. Subjects flourish on cross-fertilization and over time reorganize themselves. Top-down planning is seen in great universal classification systems that reflect theories of the universe of knowledge, from the medieval trivium and quadrivium; through Francis Bacon’s great trilogy (reason, memory, and imagination); to modern library schemes, such as Melvil Dewey’s decimal system (most of them very detailed, and most of them fundamentally derived from Bacon). These schemes are also tied down in historical time and
eventually outdated.¹ (In Dewey’s day, for instance, the social sciences were first being born.) At best, their details can be tinkered with. Categories could later be shifted to make room for new specialties, but usually with awkward new definitions of the basic concepts.

“Pragmatic” systems, in contrast, work organically, from the bottom up. The words “universal” and “comprehensive” are little known to them. They reflect John Stuart Mill’s rejection of “philosophical classification,” or “the nature of the subject matter to be divided.” Mill’s sentiments led E. Wyndham Hulme, in 1911, to argue for “an accurate survey and measurement of classes in literature.”² Out of Mill and Hulme grew the concept of “warrants,” which are the basis of classes that reflect the internal intellectual structure of the subject and its written record, instead of any conception of the universe of learning.³

In classified systems, the classes are related to each other and to the whole in three ways: (1) as LINEAGES, or ladders: the classes proceed in order of value, from top to bottom; (2) in HIERARCHIES, or taxonomies, Porphyry’s trees, with limbs, branches, and twigs, i.e., genera, species and subspecies; and (3) in ALIGNMENTS, in which the classes are concentric circles or wheels, the alignment of which brings out relationships. Ramon Llull recognized these distinctions as early as ca. 1300, at least

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¹In the medieval curriculum, for instance, music was a numerical concept, part of the quadrivium. By the late nineteenth century, in Melvil Dewey’s day, its world was alongside sports and amusements. Neither placement is either quite wrong or quite right.

²“Principles of Book Classification,” Library Association Record, 13 (1911), 445-47.

³The most important recent work on warrants has been by Clare Beghtol, whose writings include “Semantic Validity: Concepts of Warrant in Bibliographic Classification Systems,” Library Resources & Technical Services, 30 (1968), 109-125. Primary among the warrants has been literary warrant: a class is justified only when there is a literature devoted to it. (The point is driven home as one looks at the wondrously logical schemes seen in the early nineteenth-century bibliographies prepared by Johann Samuel Ersch, beautiful but benumbing in their logic, especially when they are inhabited by no or only a few entries.) Beghtol proposes other warrants – cultural warrant, use warrant, scientific warrant – to which educational warrant has been proposed as an addition. The concept of warrants has often been tacitly assumed in enumerative bibliographies that are arranged according to the inner structure of the subjects. Warrants are inevitably an important dimension in the world of classification theory.
in their incipient form\(^1\). Most library classification schemes are conceived as trees, but ideological ladders are usually hidden inside them.\(^2\) Wheel-like amenities – indexes, cross-references, prose introductions, conspectuses – allow the ladders and trees to make sense for readers who may not grasp the hierarchies, or (as very often happens) whose interests do not fit into the hierarchies.

Tabular arrangements, like spread sheets, are an attempt to allow the human eye to correlate columns so as to create wheel-like alignments.\(^3\) Computer displays are read like books, but the computers that produce them also work like wheels. The totality is not visible and entries are in no particular order in the computer’s memory until the computer’s processing system organizes them together. Search engines do the organizing, so as to produce access points that (a) work from the top down like ladders, (b) organize their elements, their subject thesauri in particular, like trees, but often also like wheels, (c) use indexes, cross-references, charts, and conspectuses that spin like wheels but are often conceived as trees – all of this, it may be argued, so that they may (d) resemble the clouds that Hamlet and Polonius studied, and where an infinity of binary bits are now stored.

Ramon Llull would probably not have known how to reconcile Pollard’s four considerations with the three basic sequences, planned either from the top down or from the bottom up. He would have loved electronic bibliography, however, with

\(^1\) *Liber de ascensu et descensu intellectu* (Book of the Ascent and Descent of the Intellect). See Thomas Walker, “Medieval Faceted Knowledge Classification: Ramon Llull’s Trees of Science,” *Knowledge Organization*, 23 (1996): 199-205. Llull’s rediscovery by modern information scientists is all the more fascinating when one recalls that Llull’s goal was to convert pagans to Christianity.

\(^2\) See pp. 000-000 below. [Ch.5]

\(^3\) Theophil Georgi’s *Allgemeines europäisches Bücher-Lexikon* (1742-58) is a remarkable early example of “spread-sheet” layout. The elements are listed in seven columns: (1) date; (2) authors’ given names; (3) author’s last name with title, this being the filing element for the set; (4) city, occasionally with the publisher; (5) “Bog.,” the number of gatherings, or *Bogen*; and (6-7) “Thl.” and “Gr.,” the price in *Thaler* and *Groschen*. It is an enormous list, fascinating to browse and occasionally useful. Georgi, alas, seems to have formulated no rules for what went in many of the columns. A search for the 1493 “Nuremberg Chronicle” is filed (i.e., formulated in column 3) under both “Chronica” and “Schedelii,” and perhaps elsewhere as well, and also under still different terms in the several supplements. Bibliographical structure, in other words, depends on bibliographical texture: what is being organized is what is specified.
its wonderfully complex mixture of ladders, trees, and wheels, well suited to his logical mind, and perhaps even his devout faith. He would not find everything he was looking for, but he would have prayed for God’s forgiveness at the Judgment Day, for himself and for the successors who would carry on his good work.

**Sources on Scope and Structure:** McArthur’s *Worlds of Reference* (1986, p. vii) discusses subject structures. His concern with concepts is relevant to subject arrangements. Structures of citations are rather different: the other elements of texture play a complex role.


Petzholdt, pp. 21-65, cites somewhat over a hundred systems for classifying books, libraries, and knowledge, 1347-1862, and he often enumerates the basic categories. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Classification, Theoretical and Practical* (Scribner, 1901; 3d ed., Wilson, 1930) includes “An Essay towards a Bibliographical History of Systems of Classification,” with summaries of the major schemes. It remains the major landmark, major successors notwithstanding, among them E.I. Samurin, *Ocherki po istorii bibliotekhno-bibliograficheskoi klassifikatsii* (1955; for a German translation see *Geschichte der bibliothekarisch-bibliographischen Klassifikation*, Bibliographisches Institut, 1964, and Verlag Dokumentation, 1967), and Ingetraut Dahlberg, *Grundlagen universaler Wissensordnung* (Verlag Dokumentation, 1974).

Bibliographers need to know both their subjects and the formal rules and informal practices of bibliography. All rules and practices can rarely avoid distorting the subject matter in the interest of *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, but imaginative readers know to call on their instincts for *bricolage*. They are, in fact are, usually and understandably, proud of it. They are critical re-compilers, with powerful random search engines. They learn alternative sequences and structures (“Look first at this, but also be aware of that”). With diligence they usually find what they are looking for, and often much more.

The function of bibliography is to act as catalysts that cite physical objects that do not change, although their content will be re-read. Thus, the citations themselves also need to change over time, in three ways:

— *in their annotations*, not so much in the brief prose statements appended to their entries (as on p. 30 above), but more profoundly in the way that their contents are described within the world of recorded knowledge;

— *in their structural contexts*, i.e., the placement of their entries in the schemes (as
discussed on pp. 32-36 above) that assigns their position in the world of knowledge. — *in the cosmetics of their presentations*, i.e., in altered formulations for different audiences of readers of bibliographical lists or because of revised citation practices.

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**POST SCRIPT.** In 1977, Alessandro Olschki introduced *Sua maestá la citazione*.¹ His Majesty the Citation is an arbitrary tyrant. He inherited his power from his ancestors who lived in a face-to-face world, and he survives today by elaborate adaptation. This is slow, cumbersome, and often not in the interests of reconciling the needs of the kingdom as a polity with what the citizenry needs and likes. His kingdom is the democracy of ideas. His civil servants are compilers and cataloguers, as well as the printers and graphic designers who make details “jump off the page” for the reader, and the planners of access structures and search term vocabularies for electronic lists. His citizenry, however grateful, can also be rather too tolerant of those who neglect their duties to the common good, i.e., readers of printed lists who grumble about not finding what has to be there, or readers of electronic sources about counter-intuitive systems.

His Majesty’s dominion is governed by a system of laws, unwritten but generally understood, created in the jurisdictions of medium, authority, reader, texture, and structure. This book is not an attempts not to codify the laws but rather to sketch of a map of the terrain of the kingdom, with an anthology of perspectives that may help keep the soil fertile. Still to be mapped are even larger and murkier terrains of bibliographical theory, some of them lined with the quicksand of complex and unanswerable questions. Those who dig into the theory, however, in practice often find it hard to retrace their steps in the kingdom’s unexplored wildernesses. They often end up tripping over the underbrush: the terrain often manages to get in the way of the theory they are attempting to describe and build on. The wilderness may be remote and obstinate, but readers love to explore it and be challenged by it. They delight in exploring it; and they depend on it.

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¹*La bibliofilia*, 79 (1977), 277-82. Olschki’s brief essay itself is actually a plea for thoughtful citation practices. His title is still notable in its own right for its rather awesome gravitas.
No attempt to set forth the premises of bibliography, or trace its history, will ever tell us exactly why Boccaccio went to Monte Cassino, or what he found there. Instead, it can suggest how bibliographical practices reflect and are basic to the dialogue between authors and readers. With these premises in mind, let us proceed to the history of the major bibliographical practices themselves.