

HISTORICAL STUDIES IN DOCUMENTATION

'BIBLIOGRAPHY' AND 'DOCUMENTATION': WORDS AND IDEAS

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THE WORD *DOCUMENTATION*, by which this journal describes its scope, is a partial synonym of *bibliography*, and the history of both words, through eighty years in one case and through four hundred in the other, reflects the development of highly significant ideas. This paper begins by discussing *bibliography* in the light of R. Blum's exhaustively learned treatise, and continues with an original exposition of *documentation*, which cannot claim to reach Blum's standard of thoroughness but does, it is hoped, set out correctly the important things.

1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

RUDOLF BLUM. *Bibliographia. Eine wort- und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*. Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 1969. xi pp, 230 columns. Reprint from *Archiv f. Geschichte des Buchwesens*. Bd. 19 Lieferung 4-5.

RUDOLF BLUM. *Bibliographia. An enquiry into its definition and designations*. Translated . . . by Mathilde V. Rovelstad. Chicago: American Library Association; Folkstone: Dawson, 1980, 251 pp. ISBN 0 7129 0916 8 and 0 8389 0146 8.

The German text was reviewed in this journal (26(4): 375 (1970)), briefly though enthusiastically, by Dr E. Rosenbaum; but as will be seen, the translation cannot be considered without reference to the original.

It is an important book. It deals with the Latin word *bibliographia* and its derivatives, synonyms, and quasi-synonyms in several languages from the sixteenth century to the twentieth. However, as the author says, 'One cannot separate the history of the word and its meaning from that of the concept and the designation for it, and both in turn are intimately connected with the history of bibliography itself.' (The English subtitle is the first of many mistranslations; it should be 'An enquiry into the history of words and ideas'.) It accordingly throws light on the use of books, and on what was done to help readers to use them, over a very long period.

After the invention of printing, the greater bulk of reading matter and its wider distribution emphasized the need for help in finding what was wanted, and bibliographies became increasingly common, at first mainly in Latin. For long, however, they were not so described, but by the Latin words *catalogus*, *elenchus*, *index*, *nomenclator*, or *bibliotheca*; the last was the title used in 1545 by the great Conrad Gesner, and perhaps by the force of his example it became the commonest, and, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the standard term.

One name for partly bibliographical works was *literary history* and its equivalents in Latin, French and German. Although it is now used for the history of *belles lettres*, it earlier had the main or sole emphasis on informative literature, and so on information and all the organizations concerned with it. The phrase was *Journal of Documentation*, Vol. 39, No. 4, December 1983, pp. 266-279.

perhaps first used by Bacon, in 1605, for a branch of study desiderated but then scarcely existing; he saw its chief value in the light it could throw on 'the use and administration of learning'—which has a very twentieth-century ring. It was taken up by many others in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they saw that literary history could also serve as a guide to the books that are the vehicles of information. It was taught in universities in Protestant Germany and adjacent countries, as bibliographical introductions to courses, books being brought into the lecture room, and such teaching led to many books on it from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, including Morhof's famous *Polyhistor*; in Germany, the practice continued into the nineteenth century. In seventeenth-century Germany and France, the phrase was used (sometimes as a title, sometimes as the description of a class of books) to mean either the record of learned writings in the past, or an account of those still current. It could thus be defined by B. G. Struve in 1704 as 'knowledge of the things relevant to the state of the commonwealth of letters'—including lists of books.

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Germany, a Latin phrase used was *notitia librorum* ('information on books'), with variants; and German scholars considered it either a part of literary history or closely related to it. From the middle of the eighteenth century, it began to be replaced by German equivalents, *Bücherkenntnis* and *Bücherkunde*.

The Latin word *bibliographia* was coined in 1633 as the title, not of a list of books, but of a discursive guide to them. It was used in this sense in Germany till 1705 (and occasionally later); but other terms were also used, and from 1703, *bibliotheca* became the standard term for such guides, not for lists of books. However, *bibliographia* and its equivalents were sometimes used from 1641–1710 to describe lists of books.

In eighteenth-century France, the Latin *bibliographi* ('bibliographers') was used as a catalogue heading for a section containing lists of books, and *bibliographia* as the name of a field of knowledge—the art of giving information on books, including cataloguing and classification. The French forms of these words were also used. In 1782, J. F. Née de la Rochelle defined *bibliographie* as 'knowledge of the literary world and description of its elements'—virtually literary history or *notitia librorum*. The fashionable French word was then quickly adopted in Germany in both its Latin and German forms.

In France itself, however, the problems of dealing with the great masses of literature confiscated after the Revolution led to the neglect of this broad concept of bibliography related to the history of ideas to concentrate on the antiquarian side. Blum comments: 'a momentous happening, perhaps even a disastrous one. The new bibliography was like a torso of the old *Historia litteraria*, lacking its head.'

Nevertheless, the commonest use of the word in French was for a field which included the history of printing and classification, sometimes indeed the whole of librarianship; and the commonest in German, for lists of literature. In both countries there were very many exceptions, and we find people referring to lists as *bibliographie proprement dite*, or as *eigentliche Bibliographie* or *reine Bibliographie*.

In Germany in recent times, to Blum's reasonable regret, *Bibliographie* and *Bücherkunde* are used interchangeably, when they might make a useful distinction between book knowledge in general and knowledge of lists of books. Bibliography has come to be included in *Bibliothekswissenschaft*, and thus become separated from literary history; but the latter has been related to it again in the

curricula of some German library schools since 1955, and apparently in the 1957 edition of Dahl's *Nordisk Håndbog i Bibliotekskundskab*.

In nineteenth-century England, Blum sees bibliography as dominated by the bibliophile and antiquarian patterns of T. H. Horne and Dibdin. This may be true of works using the name bibliography, but there were others. J. Berington's *Literary history of the middle ages* (1814), though it professes, unlike 'learned foreigners', to deal only slightly and incidentally with such topics as law and medicine, is by no means limited to *belles lettres*, and gives a good deal of rather sketchy bibliographical information. Henry Hallam's *Introduction to the literature of Europe in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries* (1837-9) has fewer exclusions, interpreting literature 'in the most general sense for the knowledge imparted through books', and it gives copious bibliographical references. It is an excellent example of this kind of writing, at perhaps the latest date at which one man could undertake such a comprehensive survey. (The latest mentioned by Blum was apparently left unfinished in 1837.) There was plenty of activity, too, in the publication of bibliographical lists, even if they did not call themselves bibliographies—the British Museum's *Subject index* (used by very many more people than those who consult the books it lists on the spot), and the Royal Society's heroic though ill-planned *Catalogue of scientific papers*. He notes the twentieth-century use of 'systematic', 'subject' and 'enumerative' bibliography, of 'historical bibliography', and of 'critical' or 'textual' bibliography for the McKerrow-Greg-Bowers kind (for which he not unreasonably regrets the use of the name 'bibliography' at all). He does not mention that Besterman in his *World bibliography of bibliographies* reckoned sets of abstracts as bibliographies.

He notes that in the United States the Kroeger-Mudge-Winchell *Guides* listed bibliographies with other reference books, a practice sometimes followed on the Continent (and also, though he does not say so, in this country); he seems to approve of this.

The foregoing is a very much simplified presentation of some of the more important strands in a very tangled scheme. I am reminded how some twenty years ago I was asked to comment on the English words in a preliminary draft of a multilingual library glossary to be published by the Danish library school. I noted down my comments, and then asked some of my colleagues for theirs; and we were surprised to find that we disagreed as to what were the normal English terms for some things. I sent all the comments to my Danish friend, warning him that we had discovered that we did not know our own language; in reply, he said that he and his colleagues had similarly found that they did not know Danish.

Blum has traced such bewildering uncertainties of terminology through four centuries with careful and impressively wide erudition, and incidentally with fascinating glimpses of library classification, university teaching, the book-trade (new and secondhand), book-collecting and the training of librarians, as well as of many fascinating personalities, some of them well known, others of whom one would like to learn more. To collect all the data is probably impossible for one man, but he cannot have missed much. The complicated story is scarcely capable of being made clear, but he pauses from time to time to give an illuminating summary.

In the English version, the complicated story is made more difficult to follow—sometimes indeed impossible—by a scarcely credible profusion of mistranslations and misprints. The mistranslations, as has been said, begin on the title-page. The misprints begin in the third line of the text, where the German equivalent

of the Latin *bibliographia* is said to be *Bibliographia* instead of *Bibliographie*. There are two other misprints on the same page, one of them the omission of a verb, which makes the sentence incomprehensible; and the same thing happens on the next page. Literal misprints abound—on p. 66 *Notitia librorum* is misspelt in two different ways in three lines. Many of these the reader will correct for himself, but some will mislead him, and he is unlikely to guess that 'outigues' on p. 61 should be 'Iudicia'. Often one cannot be sure whether errors are misprints or mistranslations, such as the omission of 'not' in three places and its insertion in two others, producing five sentences that say the exact opposite of the original. On p. 82, one complete sentence is omitted; on pp. 72–3, the beginning of one sentence is joined to the end of the next, the intervening words being omitted.

Blum very properly quotes copiously Latin and French texts which show the original contexts of the words he is discussing, occasionally giving a German translation. Unfortunately, the translator usually gives only an English version. This is unsatisfactory even when the translation is exact, and only too often it is not. In the discussion on the French words *bibliologie* and *bibliographie* (pp.97–9), *bibliologie* is repeatedly translated as 'bibliography', producing some very queer results; on p. 84, a passage distinguishing between bibliography and bibliophily becomes nonsense when both are rendered as 'bibliography'. In the tables on pp. 70–1, where Blum gives the Latin original, the translation has only English, with ten mistranslations in twenty lines, many of them disguising the very words under discussion; and at the end of the first paragraph on p. 78, the words under discussion have completely disappeared in paraphrase.

In very many other places, the translation betrays misunderstanding of the Latin, French, and even German originals, and so is seriously misleading. Even when not inaccurate, the English is awkward and unidiomatic, hard to follow and sometimes impossible to understand without reference to the original.

It is very regrettable that this important and fascinating work should be presented to the English reader in such an inadequate form. The copyright owner of the translation is the American Library Association, who presumably sponsored it; it is hard to imagine how it can have accepted such an inadequate performance. As for the printing, there can hardly have been any correction of the proofs, and it is no credit to the printers or to either publisher.

Rosenbaum's review of the original suggested that it might be worth while to learn German in order to read it. This is a counsel of perfection, but any one whose German is good enough to read the original should keep well away from the translation. Any one with a smattering of German, if he reads the translation, would do well to keep the original by him to clarify what does not make sense. Any one with no German at all will be able to read the translation with pleasure and profit, but also with a good deal of puzzlement and some misinformation. Any library which has the translation on its shelves should also acquire the original as a necessary key.

2. DOCUMENTATION

One quasi-synonym which Blum does not discuss is that by which this journal indicates its subject (though he uses it on p. 67—*Dokumentation* in the original). It seems appropriate to say something here about the word and the evolution of its meanings.

In 1945, Theodore Besterman, who planned the *Journal of Documentation* and

was its first editor, on the first page of the first number of the first volume defined the word and the scope of the journal as follows. 'Anything in which knowledge is recorded is a document, and documentation is any process which serves to make a document available to the seeker after knowledge. . . Librarianship and the organization of information services, bibliography and cataloguing, abstracting and indexing, classification and filing, photographic and mechanical methods of reproduction: all these and many others are the channels of documentation which guide knowledge to the enquirer. All, as opportunity serves, will receive attention in these pages. Nor will this attention be limited by national boundaries or by the artificial segregation of the sciences and the humanities.' Though it does not mention them individually, the general terms of the definition cover, amongst the 'many other things' it does not specify, printing, publication and bookselling, and perhaps authorship; and it is thus that Besterman's successors in the editorship have interpreted it. It is certainly wide enough to embrace developments that could not have been foreseen in 1945. And unlike many definitions we shall have to consider, it is clear and unambiguous.

This definition is wider than the general usage of 1945, but the word had already been used for some time with a range of similar meanings.

Apart from commercial uses, it meant (in French from 1870,¹ and in English from 1882²) either the process of supporting a statement by documents or the documents collected for this purpose; but in the early years of this century its usage approached Besterman's in various ways.

This development was almost certainly the work of the Belgians Henri La Fontaine (1854–1943) and Paul Otlet (1868–1944), and their creation, the Institut international de bibliographie, at Brussels. They were far-seeing and energetic, and though their vision sometimes went beyond practical possibilities, it sometimes led to real achievement. Their 'universal bibliographical register' foundered after reaching over eleven million entries, but the Universal Decimal Classification (which they devised together) and the library uses of micro-photography (of which Otlet was joint inventor) still flourish, and the Institute has developed into the equally flourishing Fédération Internationale de Documentation. They used the word *documentation* with various new meanings, and moreover seem to have felt that it had an almost magical power as a manifesto of their ideas.

In 1903, Otlet³ used it to mean the process of supplying documents or references to them to those who want the information they contain. In 1907,⁴ he used it most often with this meaning, but sometimes also with no fewer than five others: the existing body of documents relating to a particular matter; a particular collection of documents; the body of documents supplied to an enquirer; and the process of collecting documents. Finally, he sometimes uses it to mean the formation of catalogues of documents (printed or manuscript, verbal or pictorial) on slips or cards arranged by the UDC; this last is what he calls his *méthode de documentation* or *méthodes documentaires*, and by a *répertoire de documentation* or *répertoire documentaire* (phrases he regarded as synonymous with *répertoire bibliographique*) he meant such a classified catalogue of documents.

In his 1903 paper, Otlet had referred to a body of knowledge which 'considering the necessities of our language' he thought should be described by the term *sciences bibliographiques*, to which he gives a definition almost exactly corresponding to Besterman's of documentation: production, material fabrication, distribution, listing, statistics, conservation and utilization—thus including compilation, printing, publishing, bookselling, bibliography and librarianship, and consider-

ing as documents not only books and manuscripts but also (among other things) archives, maps, 'schémas, idéogrammes, diagrammes', drawings and reproductions of them, and photographs of real objects.

A further development seems to have come in 1908, when La Fontaine and Otlet⁵ in a paper full of wide-ranging enthusiasm used the word *documentation* to mean substantially what Otlet five years before had called *sciences bibliographiques*. It will have been noticed that they were not very exact in their use of words; they sometimes contrast documentation with bibliography, but they also say that bibliography is only a part of documentation. They do not offer a formal definition of *documentation*; at one point indeed they seem to limit it to the provision of complete up-to-date information supported by documents. They also use it, however, for what they call 'a new science forming itself under our eyes', in which they include (pp. 171, 173, 176, 178) authorship (and indeed even the research which sometimes precedes it), printing technology, publication, all the industrial, commercial and technical organization which produces books, bibliography and the work of libraries and *offices de documentation*. It all comes out pell-mell, but it adds up to the Besterman definition, fully fledged.

This broad meaning may have been implied when (from at least 1907), the Institut sometimes added the words 'et de documentation' to its title,⁶ and from at least 1908 sometimes called the international conferences it organized 'de bibliographie et de documentation'.⁷ Precisely what the word meant in these contexts may well have been uncertain at the time, and is certainly undiscoverable now. However, apart from these possible exceptions, the use of the word with this broad meaning seems to have lapsed for some years. Indeed in 1937, Otlet himself⁸ used it in a narrower sense, that which we are now to consider.

In 1920, the word *documentation* was revived, and at the same time given a narrower definition, which settled its most usual meaning for many years, to the frequent exclusion of the wider denotation of La Fontaine and Otlet in 1908, to which we shall return later.

The prime mover in this was a young Dutchman, Frits Donker Duyvis (1894–1961), afterwards for over thirty years secretary general of the FID. At the 1920 Congrès International de Documentation, he realized⁹ that the grandiose international schemes of the Brussels institute were not likely to be practicable, and that their aims could be better achieved country by country. Accordingly, he founded, with others, the Nederlands Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur (NIDER). He said in 1959¹⁰ that he and J. Alingh Prins coined the word to cover collectively bibliography, scientific information, registry work, and archives. (It is accordingly curious that *Registratuur* was included in the title of the institute.)

He must have been aware in 1920 of the French usage, but had perhaps forgotten this when he wrote thirty-nine years later; or perhaps he only meant that they coined the Dutch form. He ascribes to Ernst Hymans of NIDER the first definition of the new concept: 'Dokumentation ist das Sammeln, Ordnen, und Verbreiten von Angaben jeder Art' ('Documentation is the collection, arrangement, and dissemination of information of every kind'). This definition, he says, was later improved 'from the French side' as 'Documenter, c'est réunir, classer, et distribuer des données de tout genre dans tous les domaines de l'activité humaine' ('To document is to collect, classify, and disseminate data of every kind in all the fields of human activity').

It will be seen that it excludes some of the things included in La Fontaine and

Otlet's broad definition of 1908. I shall refer to it as the NIDER definition.

In 1924, when Otlet and La Fontaine were having difficulties with the Belgian authorities, they turned to Duyvis, and at a meeting in the Hague the IIB became, in fact though not in name, a federation. Out of consideration for La Fontaine and Otlet, Duyvis did not press the use of *documentation* in the title, though the word as defined above was current from that time in his circle. However, in 1931, to his surprise, the Belgians proposed that the name should be changed to *Institut international de documentation*, and this was done. Many supporters found the name silly, and the English objected that it was not English. (In 1938, in accordance with what it had actually been since 1924, the organization took its present title, *Fédération internationale de documentation*.)

In the 1920s and 1930s, the word with this narrower meaning became current in wider circles; to many who did not bother about exact definitions it probably implied chiefly the main interests of the IID and FID—the UDC and microphotography.

In French, the word came to have a very wide currency in one particular context. It was part of the usual French description of the establishments dealing with specialized information which in the 1920s were becoming more important and more aware of their importance; they were commonly called *centres de documentation* and their officers *documentalistes*. Their significance was underlined by the foundation in 1932 of the Union Française de Organismes de Documentation (UFOD). Since the word *documentation* occurred in their general name, it was often used to describe their activities. This usage is within the NIDER definition, but places special emphasis on certain aspects; the analysis (*dépouillement*) of documents, up-to-dateness, the compilation of dossiers including ephemera, elaborate and detailed service to individual users, and a staff with specialized knowledge of the subject matter.¹¹ It seems to have been felt that without all these activities, one could not claim to be practising *documentation* or to be a *documentaliste*.

From the 1930s the French words were consequently given a wide currency. This was partly in unedifying controversies in which documentation was opposed to librarianship or documentalists to librarians. (A clear and dispassionate account of the matter up to 1938 is given by Godet in the paper just referred to.)

In the *Vocabularium bibliothecarii*, first edition (1953) by H. Lemaître and A. Thompson, the French word is defined, somewhat ambiguously, as 'établissement, recherche, réunion et utilisation des documents' (through the English equivalent has the NIDER definition); in the 1958 supplement and 1962 second edition by A. Thompson, this is replaced by 'réunion et diffusion'—certainly an incomplete definition.

The word was slow to find its way into general reference books. In 1960 and 1961, two give only the pre-Otlet meanings;¹² but in 1973 and 1979, two others¹³ give the NIDER definition.

The word *documentaliste*, meaning a specialist in documentation, is said¹⁴ to have originated about 1932, and to have been adopted, together with its English and German forms, by the 1937 Paris Congrès de documentation universelle. From the 1930s, it has certainly been in common use. It appears in *Vocabularium bibliothecarii* from the first edition (1953), is missing from Robert (1960) and the *Grand Larousse encyclopédique* (1961), but appears in Robert's 1970 *Supplément*, defined rather narrowly in terms of the actual work of *centres de documentation*. The *supplément* gives three synonyms: *documentateur* (ascribed to Otlet), *documenteur* (ascribed to Jean Gérard), and *documentiste* (recommended in 1939 by the 'Office

de la langue française'); perhaps none of these got into current use. In 1956, *documentaliste* was objected to, as a barbarous neologism which could not be heard or read without shuddering, by a pugnacious defender of the purity of the French language; he returned to the attack ten years later, no doubt in vain.¹⁵

In English, *documentation* and related words were endenized very much more slowly. In 1905, Otlet¹⁶ quoted, in French translation, a statement by R. A. Hadfield in an address to the Iron and Steel Institute that the Americans were saved from duplicating research by their 'organization documentaire'; the original,¹⁷ however, though it speaks of card indexes and reference organization, does not use *documentary*, *documentation*, or any related word. From 1910 the word was sometimes used by the Brussels Institute in English versions of its papers; but it scarcely became current in anything written originally in English before the 1930s. The title of a 1927 article, 'International documentation'¹⁸ (though quoted by the OED in support of its definition) means something quite different—the documents (in the American sense of official publications) of international organizations. In 1931, as we have seen, English supporters of the IIB objected to the word as not English. In Britain, establishments such as those called *centres de documentation* in France were differently described: the British equivalent of UFOD was founded in 1924 as the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (now Aslib); their officers were called not documentalists but special librarians or information officers.

It was probably first naturalized in English, though only for a rather limited circle, by the work of A. F. C. Pollard (1877–1948) and S. C. Bradford (1878–1948), who in 1927 founded the British Society for International Bibliography, which became the British section of the IIB (of which Pollard was president in 1928–31). If it had been founded a few years later, it would no doubt have had *documentation* rather than *bibliography* in its name. In 1939, 1945 and 1948, Bradford published three definitions of *documentation*,¹⁹ all amounting to the NIDER one. In 1948, however, he also defined it more narrowly²⁰ as 'the process of collecting and subject-classifying all the records of new observations and making them available'; by 'subject-classifying' he presumably meant making a subject catalogue or subject bibliography (which for him implied the use of the UDC); this could have been called *bibliography*, but the inclusion of collecting and making available demanded the use of *documentation*. His 1945 presidential address to the BSIB, 'Fifty years of documentation',²¹ professes to limit itself to the UDC, though it does in fact touch on some other topics.

In 1939, the English word was introduced to a wider public by an article in *Nature*²² entitled 'International coordination of documentation', which is a report on the FID conference held at Zürich in the previous month. It defines documentation as 'methods and means for making available on demand the recorded facts relating to any and every subject of special study'; but it is largely concerned with the use of the UDC and with a muddled and inconclusive discussion of the relations between librarianship and documentation. Nine years later, in the *Library Association Record*,²³ 'HMC' reported under the title 'What is documentation?' on the FID conference of that year. He found it dull, being 'almost entirely' devoted to UDC revision; he said that the FID did not define documentation and added: 'It has been said, perhaps unkindly, that documentation is librarianship done by amateurs.' The author was no doubt H. M. Cashmore, Birmingham City Librarian, a doughty champion of public libraries and their staffs, and so highly suspicious of the claims of documentalists.

The word was thus becoming familiar in English to people who might have been hard put to it to define it precisely, but felt it appropriate for things they regarded with approval (or disapproval).

In 1940, I wrote²⁴ of 'the discipline which is sometimes called 'systematic bibliography' but which is now tending to . . . take to itself the ugly but, I am afraid, indispensable name of 'documentation'.' One reason why I thought it indispensable was that I wanted a word to cover as well as bibliographies other publications that give bibliographical information, such as Handbücher, reports of progress, book reviews and abstracts.

From 1947, Unesco²⁵ concerned itself with the improvement of 'scientific documentation and abstracting'; but this was in fact chiefly abstracting. It was also concerned with documentation in the social sciences. A paper written for a committee of experts it convened in 1948²⁶ listed various topics it might consider, but subsequent activities were in fact largely concerned with abstracting and with classification.

It was only slowly that the English word *documentation* was noticed by lexicographers. In the first edition (1938) of L. M. Harrod's *Librarian's glossary* it is, not surprisingly, absent. In the second (1959) it appears with a definition taken from Bradford's 1948 book (though misprinted). The third (1971) and fourth (1977) have a collection of thirteen definitions, evidently from different sources (though these are only indicated for five of them). Two of them include the recording of information—the former subtitle of this journal (ascribed to Aslib), and that of M. Taube, which is discussed below. The others are within the NIDER definition, as is that in the 1951 and 1963 editions of *Vocabularium bibliothecarii*, and that of the OED when the new meaning first appears there in the 1972 supplement.

The English word *documentalist* is said²⁷ to have been 'adopted' by the Paris conference of 1937. It is used in the 1939 *Nature* article; it occurs in *Vocabularium bibliothecarii*, in the third edition of Harrod's glossary, in the 1972 supplement to the OED, and in the British Standards Institution's *Glossary of documentation terms*.²⁸

However, it has probably rarely been used in any precise or technical sense; in Britain, the persons whom it would describe are more usually called special librarians, information officers, or information scientists; though S. C. Bradford,²⁹ when he said 'we documentalists', may have had specific characteristics in mind.

Sometimes it has been used in a vague complimentary sense, as when an obituary of A. F. C. Pollard³⁰ said that he 'was not a librarian but he was a 'documentalist' in the fullest and best sense'. H. Coblans wrote³¹ that the most powerful tool for information retrieval is 'that peculiar blend of intellect and experience, the human documentalist'; and P. R. Lewis³² wrote of Coblans, very justly, that he was 'the most open-minded and dedicated documentalist, librarian, and information scientist of our time'.

In the United States, the word *documentation* seems to have been adopted late and slowly; then for some years it was highly fashionable; but finally it was largely discarded.

It was used in 1937 when the American Documentation Institute was founded; whatever it understood by the word, it was at first mainly concerned with documentary reproduction. After 1945, however, it expanded its membership and widened its interests; from 1946 it published *American documentation* and from 1966 *Documentation abstracts*.³³ In 1949 the Special Libraries Association set up a Documentation Committee, which in 1956 led to the foundation of its Documentation Division.³⁴

For some fifteen years, the word was widely current and felt to be very significant. J. H. Shera and his associates used it a lot with various mostly narrow meanings. His interests, however, were not at all narrow. In 1949, he and Margaret Egan³⁵ put forward a unified concept which they called 'bibliographical organization', comprising general librarianship, special librarianship and documentation; this, though narrower, is reminiscent of Otlet's 1903 'sciences bibliographiques'. In 1953, M. Taube³⁶ (putting forward a broad definition) declared enthusiastically that 'Documentation is not just a new name for accustomed ways of acting. Rather is it a new dynamic synthesis.'

Actual definitions were mostly as the NIDER one, or even narrower. In 1951, the Documentation Division said, rather ambiguously, that it is 'the art comprised of (a) document reproduction, (b) document distribution, and (c) document utilisation'.³⁷ In 1952, Shera said it was 'generally considered' to comprise acquisition, organization and dissemination, and also, but only when done by libraries, 'preparation and publication'.³⁸ His own definitions varied. In 1951, he restricted it to scholarly and scientific specialists;³⁹ in 1968, however, he acknowledged⁴⁰ that this was 'too restrictive to be acceptable today'. He was not very precise in his discriminations, and on a single page⁴¹ could refer to documentation as an aspect of librarianship, and also distinguish it as something other than librarianship—like La Fontaine and Otlet on documentation and bibliography forty-nine years before. In 1955, the ADI held a competition for the best definition of documentation. The judges thought⁴² that the perfect definition was still to be written, but gave awards to three; one includes publication and two presentation perhaps even when *not* done by librarians; otherwise, they are within the NIDER definition.

In 1961, *documentation* was included in *Webster's third international dictionary* with a definition on NIDER lines; in 1976, however, *The American heritage dictionary* gave only the pre-Otlet meanings, and in 1981 the *Oxford American dictionary* gave the word but discreetly refrained from defining it. The word *documentalist* was also sometimes used for a practitioner of documentation.

However, no definition was found generally acceptable, and in 1962⁴³ a conference on the training of science information specialists agreed that *documentation* and *documentalist* were too ambiguous to be useful, and that any one using them should state his own definition. In fact, they were disused before long. In 1968, the American Documentation Institute became the American Society for Information Science, *American documentation* became *The Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, and *Documentation abstracts* became *Information science abstracts*. In 1972, A. N. Grosch wrote,⁴⁴ 'Today in the recent literature information science has replaced the term documentation in frequency of use.'

In German, the word *Dokumentation* was used in its NIDER sense by the NIDER circle, but only slowly made its way more widely. Establishments like the French were usually, as in England, given titles which did not include the word. Although they were sometimes called *Dokumentationstellen*,⁴⁵ more usual terms were *Schrifttumauskunftstellen* and *Literaturnachweisstellen*,⁴⁶ and *Studiengruppe für Literaturnachweis* was the German name for a Swiss body called in French *Comité d'études de documentation*.⁴⁷ However, in 1948 it was well enough established to be included in the title of the newly founded *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation*. The word was duly included in 1952 in the first volume of J. Kirchner's *Lexikon des Buchwesens*, and from 1953 in *Vocabularium bibliothecarii*.

The German *Dokumentalist* was adopted in 1937, along with its French and

English forms.⁴⁸ It was included in *Vocabularium bibliothecarii*, and in 1954 the FID had a committee on the training of *Dokumentalisten*.⁴⁹ More recently, however, it has sometimes been replaced by *Dokumentar*, formed presumably on the analogy of *Bibliothekar*.

I leave it to others to trace the development of these words in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, and doubtless other languages.

Nearly all the uses of *documentation* since 1920 which have been discussed above have been in the NIDER sense or even narrower ones. Nevertheless, the full range of meaning as in La Fontaine and Otlet in 1908 and Besterman in 1945 had not altogether lapsed. In 1936 and 1937, it was reaffirmed by Jean Gérard.⁵⁰ He was director of the Office International de Chimie at Paris, and for a time president of UFOD. He wrote jointly with J. A. Prins an *Introduction à l'étude et à la méthode de documentation*, published in 1936 by the Institut International de Cooperation Intellectuelle (I have not seen this). He was the organizer of the 1937 Paris Congress sponsored by the International Committee on Documentation, and perhaps the draftsman of its 'general declaration'⁵¹ which speaks of the 'documentary cycle', embracing 'on the one hand the production, classification, and conservation of documents, and on the other the elaboration, diffusion and utilisation of documentation. It concerns alike authors, publishers, archivists, librarians, keepers of museums and collections, and documentalists.' 'Documentation is concerned with all categories of documents: manuscripts, books, periodicals, patents, prints, photographs, films, disks, and items in collections and museums, all put at the service of artistic, literary, scientific and scholarly, technical, economic and social life.' In accordance with this broad conception, authors, printers and publishers were amongst those invited to the Congress, and it considered among other things the form of written works and the problems of publishing. In 1937, the Institut International de Cooperation Intellectuelle, in concert with UFOD, formulated a similar definition.⁵²

I have not been able to trace its use in this wide sense between 1937 and Besterman's revival of it eight years later; it was probably from Gérard that, directly or indirectly, he got the stimulus for his definition, which was in any case typical of his wide-ranging and synthetic way of thinking.

In 1952 and 1953, in the USA, the word was equally widely defined by M. Taube. He put forward his definition succinctly in 1952⁵³ and elaborated it in the following year⁵⁴ as 'the total complex of activities involved in the communication of the specialised information contained in this new form of literature [i.e., report literature] including the activities which constitute special librarianship plus the prior activities of preparing and reproducing materials and the subsequent activity of distribution'; or alternatively as 'an amalgam of librarianship and publishing with the added responsibility of preparing . . . the materials to be published, collected, organised, serviced, and disseminated.' He adds that 'documentation is a unity, that the common purpose of communication pervades a total complex of activities, each one of which makes its contribution to this purpose and is functionally dependent on the other activities in the complex.'

In 1978, B. C. Vickery⁵⁵ defined it again substantially in Besterman's terms.

Although *documentation* with this meaning has been neglected by lexicographers, it has continued to be used by those who are aware that all the stages in the transmission of information from the originator to the ultimate user are inter-related and interdependent.

A little may be said about some derivatives of *documentation*, other than *documen-*

talist, which has been discussed already. Otlet, in an annexe to the general annual report of the FID for 1937⁵⁶ sets out his idea of the development of documentation with all his usual enthusiasm and even more than his usual lack of clarity. It works up from the senses and reasoning to the document; then follow instrumentation and 'le document mecanique' (data recorded by instruments); and finally, as the sixth stage, *Hyper-Documentation*, the revelation by instruments of all kinds of sense data, and even of data our senses cannot perceive. The word may never have been used again, but in 1974 B. C. Brookes⁵⁷ described as a future possibility something very like it, with the addition of computerized analysis; however, unlike Otlet, he considers that information so produced would be outside the scope of documentation.

Otlet⁵⁸ sometimes used the adjective *documentaire* in its earlier sense of 'to do with documents' but he also used it to mean 'to do with documentation'. This practice has continued in French, with results that are sometimes confusing and often odd, as 'La formation documentaire' (meaning 'Training in documentation'), the title of a 1982 special number of *Documentaliste, sciences de l'information*. *Documentary* has sometimes been used in this sense in English.⁵⁹ In order to avoid this ambiguity, in 1948 I coined the word *documentational*,⁶⁰ but so far as I know it has never been used again.

In French, *documentologie* has sometimes been used to mean the study of documentation.⁶¹ In 1965, its use was urged by D. Isakovič.⁶² It appears in the *Trésor de la langue française* (T. 7. 1979), but with a definition that would apply rather to *documentation*. *Documentalistics*, perhaps only in its Russian form, has also been used in this sense.⁶³

In French, *une documentographie* has been used as one speaks of a *bibliography*, presumably for a list of items.⁶⁴

It remains to speak, very shortly, about two synonyms that have sometimes superseded *documentation*—*information science* and *informatics*. Both of them duly appeared in 1976 in the OED Supplement.

In the USA from the later 1960s, as has been said, a successful competitor was *information science*, which had already been current for some time. Jesse Shera regretted the obsolescence of *documentation* and was unenthusiastic about the newcomer. In 1968, he said unkindly, adapting the words of Christopher Robin's friend Rabbit, that information science was 'sure to be a science because of calling it a science';⁶⁵ and two years later, he was complaining that no one knew what it was and talking of its unfulfilled promise.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, it established itself firmly in the United States, and, perhaps to a less extent, in Britain.

Informatics, after tentative use and suggestions in West European languages and in Russian, was formally proposed as a substitute for *documentation* by A. I. Mikhailov (the director of VINTI) and two colleagues.⁶⁷ Their paper includes a survey of the use of *documentation*, particularly from the 1940s onwards, and is clear and closely reasoned, though not everyone will agree with their conclusions. The exhilarating effect of a new word is shown again by a 1970 paper entitled 'Informatics' by D. J. Foskett;⁶⁸ it ranges widely over many topics for which he acknowledges that the term *informatics* may not become acceptable; and indeed they could well be called either information science or documentation. The word, in spite of its inclusion in OED, does not seem to have established itself in current English usage. In French, *informatique* is used, but in the restricted sense of mechanical and electronic handling of information.

The search for better justification than Rabbit's for the scientific status of what

these terms denote is only one theme in a story of ambiguities and complications as tangled as that of *documentation*. However, it will not be pursued further in this place.

In view of Besterman's emphasis in his definition on what he called *knowledge* but might have called *information*, there seems no reason to abandon what Shera⁶⁹ called 'the familiar and euphonious *documentation*', 'with all its history, richness, and connotative subtlety'.

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