

Editorial

Eric de Grolier and the Organization of Knowledge

It is exactly 60 years ago, when Eric de Grolier - apparently then at the age of 20 - discussed classification at an FID conference in The Hague in 1931 and presented a paper on the Bliss Classification. In 1937 he proposed the establishment of an international body for classification research which was not, however, realized until about ten years later, in 1946, through the FID Commission de Classification Comparée, the forerunner of FID/CR. The history of this committee up to the year 1981 has once been described in (1). And it was at its 4th International Conference in 1982 that Eric de Grolier stated:

"I am confident in the future of our discipline ... The only thing which is still lacking is an international association. You might say that FID/CR is an international association, however it is only a part of a greater organization. Maybe there will be an autonomous international association in the near future" (2).

Yes, Pauline A. Cochrane points it out in her article on de Grolier's conference summarizations in the present IC issue:

"In 1982 he appears to have planted the idea of the organization which was founded in 1989, namely the 'International Society for Knowledge Organization'".

The ISKO founders of 1989 had forgotten about Eric de Grolier's remarks from 1982, but they are happily recalling now his prophetic words!

The Editors of International Classification are proud of having Eric de Grolier among its consulting editors from the very beginning of this journal in 1974! And when in June 1989 all of the consulting editors were asked about the possibility of founding a new international society for classification/knowledge organization, the ISKO founding members were glad to receive de Grolier's enthusiastic letter of 11 July 1989, welcoming the intended creation of this Society:

"J'approuve entièrement votre idée de fonder une association internationale pour l'étude des problèmes de taxinomie, classification et organisation des connaissances. Je pense qu'elle est réalisable"

Thus it is only natural that when such an eminent representative of our field of concern will celebrate his 80th birthday on June 25, 1991, that he should see and feel how his colleagues would like to honor him and show their gratefulness for all his 'fighting' for the recognition and future of knowledge organization throughout the past 60 years!

We are very happy indeed to be able to devote this number of International Classification 91-2 as a Festschrift issue to ERIC DE GROLIER, presenting in it not only a series of very valuable articles in his honor, as e.g. the ones by Douglas FOSKETT, A. NEELAMEGHAN, Winfried GÖDERT, Fred RIGGS, and Robert

FUGMANN, but also two contributions evaluating some of Eric's work, as e.g. his 7 FID reports (by Jacques MANIEZ) and some of his conference summarizations (by Pauline A. COCHRANE). Last, but not least, Eric will have a word himself, we included a reprint of his *Synoptic Critique* of 1966 in this issue as an example of his gift of summarizing and synthesizing the results of a conference. As none of us ever heard anything about his 'other' life, we have been very fortunate to get from him an 'Interview' which follows on the next page.

I would like to add a personal 'thank you, dear Eric' here: After having read in 1964 the most relevant work to my own field of interest, viz. the *Study of General Categories applicable to Classification and Coding in Documentation*, I met Eric de Grolier at the FID Conference in The Hague, 1966. It was then that he admonished not to forget to take up the continuation of classification bibliography which Richardson had started in 1910 (3) with the listing of 337 classification systems of the past 2000 years. This his hint to the necessary documentation of classification literature anchored deep in my memory and as soon as it was possible - beginning with the first number of International Classification in 1974 and more so by an application - in 1979 - for an R&D project of such a bibliography. For practical reasons, however, we started collecting only the items published after World War II. Now, they are published in 3 volumes so far, as the 'International Classification and Indexing Bibliography' (ICIB) with the literature of the period 1950-1982 (4). It is our desire, if time and finances allow, to publish the missing volumes 4 and 5 still in 1991/92 and to update the contents of all volumes by a sixth volume with the titles of 1982-1991, so far only contained in the Classification Literature section of International Classification.

So this suggestion of Eric de Grolier has found its realization too and it should now be up to our community to become aware of the necessity to dig for further still retrievable nuggets in the heritage which Eric has left to us - as we will see in his Interview - also in unpublished form in many archives of this world.

In celebrating and commemorating with this Festschrift issue Eric de Grolier's contributions to our field of Knowledge Organization let us give thanks to the One Who called him into this life and Who took care that he received the insight, the vigor, the gifts necessary to become instrumental for the shaping of our discipline!

Ingetraut Dahlberg

(1) Dahlberg, I.: 35 Years of FID/CR. Int. Forum Inf. Doc. 6(1981) No.3, p.20-26

(2) Grolier, E.de: Synthesis of the 4th FID/CR Conference. In: Perreault, J.M., Dahlberg, I.: Universal Classification II. Subject Analysis and Ordering Systems. Frankfurt: Indeks Verl. 1983. p.163-167

(3) Richardson, E.C.: Classification. Theoretical and practical. Hamden, CT: Shoe String Press 1964. XVIII, 228p. (reprint of 3rd ed. of 1930)

(4) For a complete listing see the Indeks Verlag Catalogue.