

Carlo Bianchini – Lucia Sardo

Editorial

A Conference in memory of the 50th anniversary
S.R. Ranganathan's (1892-1972) death
(Cremona, University of Pavia, May 23rd, 2022)

The year 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the death of Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan (9 August 1892, Shiyali, Madras, India- 27 September 1972, Bangalore, Mysore), an Indian librarian and scholar, unanimously considered the father of Indian librarianship and known worldwide for his groundbreaking five laws of librarianship and profoundly innovative theories in the field of bibliographic classifications.

Initiatives to remember him were organised mainly in his motherland (such as the celebration in India of the Librarian's Day dedicated to him from 27 September 2021 to 27 September 2022), while occasions in Europe and other continents were very rare indeed. To celebrate the famous librarian, the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage (Cremona) of the University of Pavia organised two separate initiatives: in collaboration with prof. Lucia Sardo (University of Bologna, Italy) and prof. Ignacio Mancini¹ (Universidad

¹ Ignacio Mancini graduated in Library and Information Science at the University of

de Buenos Aires, Argentina) an international conference and, in collaboration with the SpazioMythos theatre company of Cremona, a performance that staged the salient features of the great librarian's librarianship by means of a few excerpts from his own texts.²

The international conference, in a mixed mode of presence at the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage, University of Pavia, Italy and at a distance, was promoted by Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Italy, Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology, Brasil, the Italian Chapter of the International Society of Knowledge Organization, Società Italiana di Scienze bibliografiche e biblioteconomiche, Italy Italy, Associazione Italiana Biblioteche, Italy, Biblioteca Statale di Cremona, Italy, and Comune di Cremona, Italy.

The conference aimed to bring out and deepen the lesser known themes of Ranganathan thought. who, through his vast scholarly production, dealt with topics such as the disciplinary collocation of librarianship, management librarianship and the national library system; documented his travels in European and American libraries; dealt with school libraries and the problems related to library acquisitions and, at the same time, the material aspects of books and documentation; and participated in the creation of standards and the promo-

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² *The idea for the play came from excerpts from Ranganathan's Reference Service, in which the author described, for educational and didactic purposes, real episodes of dialogues and interactions between readers and librarians in the library. The success of a previous 'acted reading' carried out by a group of librarians from the Friuli Venezia Giulia section of the AIB at the University of Udine in 2011 and the strength and freshness of the Indian librarian's work, suggested a new re-elaboration of the texts for the stage by Enrico Tomasoni, which was performed on the evening of the same day dedicated to the conference. A record of the play (in Italian) is available on the Youtube channel of the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage (Cremona), University of Pavia, at the following address: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVUKNSXQbPw>>.*

tion of public library acts on a national level. For that reason, the conference involved Italian and foreign experts in individual themes, who proposed an in-depth reading of specific original texts by Ranganathan with the dual aim of highlighting the topical aspects and comparing his thought with that of other 'classical' authors who have tackled the same theme.

The international conference, which registered a total of 60 participants in a mixed presence and distance mode, opened with the institutional greetings of the Deputy Head of the Department Ingrid Pustijanac, followed by introductory speeches by Carlo Bianchini and then by Lucia Sardo on the reasons for the meeting.

In this special issue of Bibliothecae.it the conference proceedings are published, to give testimony of the event devoted to great Indian librarian.

The first paper is by Fiammetta Sabba³ and it is entitled Il "Library Tour" (1948) di Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan: la costruzione dell'io bibliotecario indiano attraverso un 'tour of the West' (Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan's "Library Tour" (1948): the construction of the Indian librarian self through a 'tour of the West'). It investigates the most consistent travel testimony left by Ranganathan, relating to his journey in Europe and America in 1948. Through the analysis of the editorial and content structure of the Library Tour: Europe and America. Impressions and reflections (Delhi, Indian Library Association, 1948), Sabba illustrates the type of travel related experience lived by the Indian librarian, the planning and conduct of this travel, and in particular the professional and scientific reflections that Ranganathan develops with a focus on possible realisations in his home country.

In her I concetti di documento e documentazione dal punto di vista ran-

³ *Fiammetta Sabba is associate professor and President of Master degree in Library and Archives Sciences (University of Bologna). She is director of 'Bibliothecae.it' and of the Summer School 'Linked data per i beni culturali', President of the SC of the Ravenna Campus Library, member of the Scientific Steering Committee of the SBA-UNIBO, and Scientific Director of LUDI Center. Main works include: Angelo Maria Bandini in viaggio a Roma (1780-1781) (Firenze, FUP, 2019); Viaggi tra i libri, Serra, 2018; La Bibliotheca universalis di Conrad Gesner, monumento della cultura europea, (Roma, Bulzoni, 2012); Indice degli autori dei manoscritti in scrittura Latina della Biblioteca Angelica di Roma, (Roma, PZS, 2009); Profilo di Storia della Bibliografia, with Alfredo Serrai (Milano, Sylvestre Bonnard, 2005).*

ganathiano (*The concepts of Document and Documentation from the perspective of Ranganathan*), María Arminda Damus⁴ analyses Ranganathan's works *Documentation and its facets. Being a Symposium of 70 papers by 32 authors (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1971) and Documentation: genesis and development, (Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1973)*. So, she reconstructs the correct and full meaning of the term document and documentation, both central concepts contained in the works, as seen by Ranganathan at the end of his days, with a wealth of experiences, memories and trips around several countries, without losing his national identity and traditions.

Carlo Bianchini's paper – Ranganathan and the social role of Bibliography – is developed starting from the reading Ranganathan's *Physical Bibliography for Librarians (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1974)*, that is to say the second posthumous edition of *Social bibliography and physical bibliography for librarians (Delhi, Delhi University, 1952)*, which suggested a reflection on the meaning of the expression "social and physical bibliography", a term, the latter, otherwise uncommon in librarians' terminology. The starting point of the investigation is the object of interest of bibliography, the book, of which Ranganathan identifies three components on the basis of philosophical concepts from Indian culture: the Soul (atma; the idea or intellectual content), the subtle Body (sukshma sarira; the expressive form) and the heavy Body (shtula sarira; the physical object). From this premise, various declinations and typologies of Bibliography as a field of study, both documentary and physical, are examined, and Ranganathan's vision of Bibliography as a teaching subject for librarians paves the way for the concept of social bibliography, whose identification and definition by the author offer a still relevant model for future developments of the book studies.

Tra comunicazione scientifica, scienze del documento e Scienza dell'informazione: Ranganathan e la documentazione negli anni '50 e '60 del

⁴ María Arminda Damus is teacher-researcher of the National University of Misiones (Argentina). She has a degree in Library Science and Documentation and she is finishing a Master's degree in Epistemology and History of Sciences. It performed professionally in different kinds of libraries: popular, university and special library. Moreover, she is a full-time professor in the areas of the "Theoretical basis of Library and Information Science" and "Organization and treatment of information".

Novecento (Between scientific communication, document science and information science: Ranganathan and documentation in the 1950s and 1960s) is the title of the last presentation of the first part of the conference, and of the essay by Giulia Crippa⁵ here offered. Crippa analyses the process of elaboration of the concept of documentation proposed by Ranganathan by relating it to numerous theoretical reflections at an international level. The comparison is developed from those of Jenkinson and Briet, settled in the 1950s, in a context characterised by a rich and lively dialogue on the subject as a consequence of the post-war technological-scientific impulse and the constantly growing informational phenomena, with particular reference to developing countries. The influence of Ranganathan's theorisations on the development of Information Science in Brazil is therefore investigated, through the use made of them by the most eminent author on the subject, Edson Nery da Fonseca.

Lucia Sardo's contribution Ranganathan e le associazioni professionali internazionali (Ranganathan and international professional associations), which opened the second part of the meeting, considers Ranganathan's activities in the context of international professional associations such as IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and FID (Fédération Internationale d'Information et de Documentation). In the context of IFLA, the Indian scholar's commitment is examined through the lecture of his article IFLA - What it should be and do, published on "Libri" in 1954 and solicited by the then President of IFLA. Ranganathan shows a precise criticism of IFLA attitude towards 'non-Western' countries, while at the same time offers suggestions to promote their greater participation. In the context of

⁵ *Giulia Crippa is Associate Professor at the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Bologna. She was Full Professor at the University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto Campus, in the course of Information and Documentation Sciences. She is an accredited doctoral and master professor of the postgraduate program in Information Sciences at ECA-USP. From 2012 to present she composes the Board of Directors of the Italian Memory House (CMI) in Ribeirão Preto. She is head of the research group of the CNPq Directory BIBLIOTHECA DISCIPLINATA dedicated to the studies of historical bibliography. She is a researcher in the research group of the CNPq PRACTIC - Group of studies on cultural practices and information and communication technologies. She had a post-doctoral internship at CSAC - Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (University of Parma, Italy). Since 2017, she has been the editor-in-chief of the journal InCID.*

FID, in which Ranganathan nevertheless shows himself to be attentive to the problems of internationalisation, his role is much more active and crucial and is characterised by his direct involvement in the creation of FID/CA, the FID committee on classification theory.

Luisa Marquardt⁶ and Raj Kumar Bhardwaj⁷ – in their Ranganathan's Legacy and Implications of The Five Laws of Library Science on School Librarianship: An Exploratory Study – present the results of an exploratory survey, conducted online and distributed via the IFLA and IASL mailing lists between March and April 2022, aimed at illustrating the extent to which Ranganathan's legacy is still alive and the relevance and librarians' knowledge of the Five Laws of Librarianship in the context of school libraries. The results show that Ranganathan's contribution about the importance of the reader is still relevant in everyday library practice along with the Five Laws, of which the survey provides examples of their validity in the school library context as well.

⁶ *Luisa Marquardt (M.Ed. ; M.LIS; M.e-L) teaches Library and Information Science at "Roma Tre" University, Department of Education and Department of Humanities. She specializes in both pedagogical and librarianship fields. She worked as county librarian for over twenty years and a librarians' trainer. Since the end of the 1970s, she has been professionally dealing in a particular (but not exclusive) way with school libraries and the cognitive, meta-cognitive and relational effects of their use, as well as training and professional development in this area. She is actively involved in library associations (AIB, IFLA, IASL, CNBA etc.), which promote and support the library profession in different contexts, and in various cultural associations (Forum del Libro, OPAM etc.) which promote reading and literacy. Among her most recent works, Marquardt, L. Viel Licht und Schatten: Italienische Bibliotheken. In N. Werr & R. Musser, Das Bibliothekswesen in der Romania. Berlin: DeGruyter-Saur, 2019; Marquardt, L., & Anagnostopoulos, E. (Cur.). (2020). Competenze, orientamento, empowerment per l'inclusione: trasversalità e trasferibilità di skills, strumenti e pratiche [...]. Milano: Ledizioni; Marquardt, L., Moretti, G., & Morini, A.L. (Cur.). (2021). La biblioteca scolastica e le sue figure professionali: concetti in trasformazione [...]. Milano: Ledizioni.*

⁷ *Raj Kumar Bhardwaj (MCA, MLIS e M.Phil., PhD) is the recipient of the UNESCO fellowship for Information Management and the prestigious Commonwealth Professional Fellowship. Presently working as Chief Librarian at St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi (India). He worked as an Assistant Professor in the School of Information and Communication Studies at the Central University of Punjab, India and played a vital role in the curriculum design for the Masters and PhD programme and introduced four new courses. Prior to this, he served as Deputy Librarian at Nalanda University and Judges Library, High Court of Punjab and Haryana, Chandigarh. He has authored books, research papers, contributions to various international conferences (IFLA WLIC, DELNET-NACLIN etc.).*

*Enrico Pio Ardolino's*⁸ *Geopolitica bibliotecaria: Camerani, Ranganathan e la ricostruzione democratica dell'AIB (Library Geopolitics: Camerani, Ranganathan and the democratic reconstruction of the AIB) surveys the relationship between the Indian librarian and Italy through the analysis of a series of unpublished documents preserved in the AIB archives that make light on some of Ranganathan's brief stays in our country and illustrate the friendship and collaboration between him and Vittorio Camerani, the librarian of the International Institute of Agriculture who signed the first Italian review of one of Ranganathan's works. From the correspondence between Camerani and Francesco Barberi, which bears timely witness to the scholar's Italian stages, the latter's decisive role in assigning Italy the organisation of the 17th Session of the IFLA and the 18th International Congress of the FID held in Rome in September 1951 clearly emerges.*

*Gustavo Saldanha*⁹ *was due to give the second speech scheduled for the second part of the conference but was unable to attend due to sudden family*

⁸ *Enrico Pio Ardolino is Researcher at the Department of Modern Literature and Cultures of the Sapienza University of Rome, he deals with the history and historiography of libraries between the modern and contemporary ages with particular attention to the history of readers and the use of libraries. Moreover, he is the author of the book Storiografia delle biblioteche: genesi, stabilità e fratture di una tradizione di studi (Historiography of libraries: genesis, stability and fractures of a tradition of studies, Pesaro, Metauro, 2020). He is a member of the scientific committee of the journal «Bibliothecae.it», of the Doctoral College in Documentary, Linguistic and Literary Sciences (Sapienza) and of the scientific college of the University Laboratory of Documentation and Information (LUDI) of the University of Bologna. He coordinates the website L&L Lives and Libraries: readers and libraries in contemporary Italy.*

⁹ *Gustavo Saldanha holds Bachelor of Library Science from the School of Information Science at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG); Master in Information Science by the Graduate Program in Information Science at UFMG; specialist in Medieval Philosophy (Faculdade São Bento - Rio de Janeiro); PhD in Information Science from PPGCI IBICT UFRJ. He held a postdoctoral internship at Université Toulouse III-France between 2017-2018. He is a senior researcher at the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (IBICT), coordinator of the Teaching and Research, Science and Information Technology (COEPE) unit of IBICT and permanent professor of the Graduate Program in Information Science under the IBICT agreement - Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ); adjunct professor at the School of Library Science at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) and permanent professor at the Graduate Program in Library Science (UNIRIO).*

problems. Fortunately, it is possible to recover his contribution by publishing his essay on the pages of this journal together with the other conference proceedings. In his text entitled Ranganathan between philosophical and epistemological methods: the problem of Library Science “scientificity in the 1930s, Saldanha discusses the advance in Library Science epistemological construction during the 1930s, mainly due to large publications of philosophical and epistemological background as result of the works of Paul Otlet, Ortega y Gasset, and Ranganathan, as well as of the developments of the Library Graduate Chicago School in the United States. The scientific method is, therefore, the object of questioning about the scientificity of Library Science in this period between philosophical and epistemological approaches. The paper, anchored in a historical epistemology, discusses the place of Ranganathan’s thought in the 1930s and his epistemological concern developing the Five Laws of Librarianship in the face of international production in the field, and contributes to the understanding of the relationship between philosophy and epistemology in Ranganathan’s thought.

*During the conference, two more presentations were given by Ignacio Mancini and Elsa M. Ramírez Leyva,¹⁰ but unfortunately the two scholars were not able to submit a text for publication.¹¹ In his presentation Ranganathan’s Five Laws of Library Science in Pandemic Argentina (*Le cinque Leggi della Biblioteconomia nella Argentina pandémica*), Ignacio Mancini started from a quick examination of the effects on libraries and the social impact of the pandemic emergency in Argentina, to analyse the reaction and activities of libraries through the model of the Five Laws of Librarianship theorised by*

¹⁰ Elsa Margarita Ramírez Leyva has a degree in Information Sciences at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. She is researcher at the Library and Information Research Institute (IIBI) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), in the area of research Reading, and coordinates the Reading Research Seminar. She is President of the Reading and Literacy Section (LEA) of Mexican Library Association (AMBAC). Currently, General Director of Libraries and Digital Information Services (DGBSDI) of the UNAM.

¹¹ Their speeches can be view by the full audio video recording of the international conference, that is available on the Youtube channel of the Department of Musicology and Cultural Heritage (Cremona), University of Pavia, at the following address: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiGOLTu-QZI>>.

Ranganathan. Elsa M. Ramírez Leyva presented her speech titled The reference service in Ranganathan's futuristic vision of librarianship in which effected a reflection on the qualities and capabilities of the reference librarian and the characteristics of his service as expressed in Ranganathan's futuristic vision of librarianship. These qualities and capabilities, defined more than seventy years ago by the Indian scholar in Reference service (2. ed., Bombai, Asia Publishing House, 1961) and in Library Manual (Delhi: Indian Library Association, 1951), prove to be essential characteristics in the current context, in relation to the digital services that need to be developed to adapt and update the role of an integrated guide, educator and librarian facing new challenges in the hybrid information ecosystem.

The issue is enriched by three contributions that expand on the topics discussed at the conference and offer insights to the reader into the reference service, the possibilities offered by linked open data to foster the spread of Colon Classification and an impassioned reconstruction of the fundamental importance of the figure of Ranganathan for the birth of librarianship in India.

Caterina Licul's¹² contribution L'applicazione dei Linked Open Data alla creazione dei numeri di libro (The application of Linked Open Data to the creation of book numbers) is the report of a research that aimed at verifying the feasibility of the automatic or semi-automatic creation of Colon Classification of book numbers for manifestation, besides the class number for authors and works. The research demonstrated that the same procedure adopted for the creation of class numbers for authors and work can be applied to the automatic or semi-automatic creation of book numbers; moreover, books numbers can be automatically merged with the class numbers in order to obtain call numbers, i.e. the most complete notation provided for by Colon Classification.

Secondly, Cucchetti's work Le origini del Reference: analisi e sviluppo del servizio (The origins of Reference: analysis and development of a service)

¹² *Caterina Licul graduated in 2019 in Preservation of Cultural Heritage (archival-librarian curriculum) at the University of Udine, presenting a thesis entitled L'applicazione dei Linked Open Data alla produzione dei numeri di libro. In 2023, she graduated at Ca' Foscari University of Venice in History and Management of the Archival and Bibliographical Heritage, with a thesis titled I servizi online delle biblioteche pubbliche del Friuli-Venezia Giulia. For two years she worked as a librarian in many libraries of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy).*

deals with reference service and analyses the historical context in which it was gradually ideated and developed and the authors who have contributed most to its theoretical definition. The historical analysis concludes with Ranganathan's fundamental contribution, which constitutes the synthesis of everything that reference has been up to then and that has influenced and continues to influence reflection on the subject.

Finally, Satija's¹³ essay reviews Ranganathan's fundamental role in the realisation of what he calls the Indian Library Movement. In fact, Ranganathan, besides being actively engaged at the international level, was the advocate and promoter of the development of Indian libraries and librarianship, always striving to ensure that India too played an important role on these fronts. According to Ranganathan, India needed a strong and structured library system, capable of responding to the information needs of every single reader, in order to foster the economic, technological and scientific development of the newly born nation.

The conference that took place in Cremona was an occasion of considerable importance for excavating the analyses and expanding the knowledge of Ranganathan's thought, through the reading and comparison of lesser-known works and aspects of the famous librarian. The initiative unquestionably showed that there is more space for new studies and further meetings on Ranganathan's vision of library science as a whole, and we are very grateful to Prof. Fiammetta Sabba for her availability in hosting the conference proceedings in Bibliothecae.it.

Carlo Bianchini and Lucia Sardo

¹³ M. P. Satija is Visiting Professor Guru Kashi University, India, and an Emeritus fellow in the Department of Library & Information Science, Guru Nanak Dev University, India. In his long professional career he has written extensively on library classification systems, especially the Dewey Decimal Classification and the Colon Classification. He has authored textbooks on every edition of the DDC since the 19th (1979). He has collaborated with three successive editors of the DDC and his works have been translated in many European, and Asian languages. Dr. Satija serves on the editorial boards of many international journals including the ISKO journal Knowledge Organization, and is a member of the UDC Consortium, The Hague. He recently published, together with Alex Kyrios, *A Handbook of History, Theory and Practice of the Dewey Decimal Classification System* (ALA Publishing, 2023).