

Preface

Indexing is an anonymous profession. An index may be praised or blamed, but rarely is the indexer named, lauded, or shamed. There is, regrettably, no publishing tradition of naming the person who compiled an index. Authors do occasionally thank and name their indexers, and authors who self-index sometimes admit to the fact in their prefaces; but these are the exceptions. "Alas," says Hazel Bell, at the beginning of her book, "the names of indexers are rarely known, from the earliest times to the present day; makers of indexes are little credited."

I have often wondered why this is so. Why are indexers so self-effacing? Or, perhaps it should be: why have they tacitly accepted the effacement imposed upon them? Is it simply the legacy of a pre-professional era? Is it a genuine humility in the face of The Author? Is it publishing inertia? The profession as a whole seems content with its lot. It is always "Indexes Praised" and "Indexes Censured" in the regular section of the Society's journal. Never "Indexers."

It is difficult to think of parallels for such self-imposed obscurity. The lexicographers who write the individual entries in a dictionary are not named, but at least their editorial role is clearly stated in the prelims. Encyclopaedia contributors, likewise, are usually listed. Only in the most amateur of reference works, such as the so-called "wiki" compilations, do we get a conscious avoidance of naming—and for good reason, given the misinformation they contain.

Perhaps, if the climate changes, indexers will begin to receive the public recognition they deserve. But how does one change a climate? The first step is to make people aware of the need for change. And the best way of doing that is to demonstrate what we have missed through unawareness. Having read Hazel Bell's book, I am sad that I did not know its contents before. I knew most of the names it contains and have had the privilege of meeting a few of them in the flesh, but I was unprepared for the range, diversity, and sheer brilliance of the personalities lying behind the names. She quotes Robert Collison's observation: "The personality of the indexer is never far behind the index." But without a

name, that sense of personality is doomed to stay vague, incomplete, and unmemorable.

From Flock Beds to Professionalism changes all that. It is, as its sub-title says, a history of index-makers, not a history of indexes. And although it is the history of indexing that governs the structure of the book, it is the personalities of the indexers themselves that shine through it. And not only the 65 "lone workers" here singled out for special treatment. I promise you, you will not forget Lindsay Verrier in the introduction who, worried about how to maintain control over a roomful of indexing slips and carbons, remarks: "Our main enemies are hurricanes, housegirls and cocktail parties."

Only when people realize just how many well-known names have engaged in indexing will the climate change. Who knows, apart from a scholarly few, that Lewis Carroll was an indexer? Or Samuel Pepys? Or Georgette Heyer? Or Nietzsche? Who knows, apart from those in the profession, that prominent people of our own time, such as Bernard Levin, have applauded and feted their indexers? After this book, it will be much easier to know.

Present-day indexers can justly be proud of their intellectual antecedents. And one day, future generations of indexers will be proud of them—but only if they are known. This book makes me think: has not the time come to make a case for the public and permanent recognition of indexers, as individual names rather than as mysterious underlying forces? It would cost publishers nothing, and it would send a message to the even greater forces of anonymity controlling internet sites: that it is people who must ultimately take responsibility for public texts.

Future Hazel Bells will make collections of twenty-first-century indexers as part of indexing historiography. But their task will be much easier if all they have to do to discover who compiled an index is look for the name at the back of the book that would routinely appear under the heading "Index." And perhaps, just perhaps, one of those historiographers will note that this new climate began with the publication of *From Flock Beds to Professionalism*.

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Bernardo Machiavelli

indexes to Livy

1428–1500

In the year 1475 the Florentine lawyer Bernardo Machiavelli, who was known as a humanist and serious student of Roman antiquities, was asked by a printer in his city, Nicolaus Laurentii, to compile an index of names to Livy's *Decades* (the history of Rome). The printer delivered proof sheets to Machiavelli and no doubt expected the index to be ready soon. But the learned lawyer went about his task in a very thorough manner, indexing not only the names of kings, warriors, and other famous men and women, but also the cities, provinces, islands, mountains and rivers mentioned in Livy's work, so that the job took him nine months. The proof sheets were then taken by his six year old son Niccoló to a local bindery to be made into a sturdy volume for his father's library.

What happened to the index is, however, not known. The Florentine edition of Livy was apparently never published or, at least, no trace of such an edition can be found in any bibliography of incunables or in the list of known works printed by Laurentii. The story of this index is known from the *Libro di recordi*, written by the elder Machiavelli some ten years later. Niccoló Machiavelli's association with Livy's history did not end, however, with his early trip to the bindery: his most famous work, *The Prince*, originally formed a part of his *Discourses*, which was written in the form of a commentary on Livy's work.

Long after the elder Machiavelli's index to Livy was lost, others rose to the task of providing indexes to this very popular work. It so happened that Johannes Schoeffer (the son and heir of Peter Schoeffer, Gutenberg's assistant and thereafter the first printer) in Mainz, and the no less famous Venetian printer Aldus Manutius, published editions of Livy, independently of each other, in the year 1518. Schoeffer's edition announced on the title page that it had an "index copiosus," while Aldus proudly claimed that his edition had an "index copiosissimus rerum omnium memorabilium" and also revealed the name of its compiler, J. Malatesta. That index was indeed "most copious," occupying no less than

47 leaves. It was reprinted in several other editions of Livy published in the sixteenth century. (This was possible because at that time indexes to classical texts still referred to chapters and sections instead of pages, so that an index, once compiled, could be appended to different editions.)

1. Clough, Cecil H. 1967. *Machiavelli researches*. Napoli, p. 87.

H. W. W.

Ludovico Dolce
revisionist indexer
1508–68

Ludovico Dolce was a Venetian printer, dramatist, editor, translator, indexer (and plagiarist, claiming as his own original work his translation of Camillo Leonardo's *Speculum lapidum*): an example of the new profession made possible by the invention of printing, the *poligrafo* ("polygraph"). In 1542 he began a collaboration with the printer, Gabriele Gioloto, who produced the 1552 edition of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The book of the courtier*), a book of advice on courtly etiquette. Dolce provided indexes both for that edition and the subsequent edition of 1574. His indexes to the first of these editions was more like a summary of perceived highlights and key points in each book: a detailed chapter breakdown presented in chronological order. The second version of the index, though, thirty-two years later, is more comprehensive, greatly increased in size, and less prescriptive, more conventional and scholarly.

T. N.

John Marbeck
heretical indexer
c.1510–c.1585

John Marbeck (or Merbeeke), rather than an indexer *entier*, was the compiler of the first complete concordance in English to the entire Bible, published in 1550. He was a versatile scholar, author of several theological works, and organist at the Chapel Royal, Windsor. His *Boke of common praier noted*, an adaptation of the plain chant to the first Prayerbook of Edward VI, is still sung in English cathedrals.

Marbeck was less fortunate with his concordance. The chapters of the Bible had been subdivided into verses a few years previously; Marbeck, being unaware of this, referenced only to chapters.¹ At some time around 1542 his house in Windsor was raided and searched: the notes for his concordance were seized and held to be heretical. He was condemned to be burnt at the stake as a Reformer in 1544, but was pardoned by Bishop Gardiner.

Various reasons have been suggested for the condemnation of Marbeck's concordance: that it detracted from the authority of Christian clergy by making theological information directly accessible to the laity; that at that period it was priests alone who should serve as intermediaries between the individual and God; and that Divine Revelation might thereby be reduced to human proportions and the canonical shape of the Bible be challenged.²

1. Farrow, John. (1996). Alexander Cruden and his concordance. *The Indexer* 20 (1): 55–6.
2. Weinberg, Bella Hass. (1999). "Indexes and religion: reflections on research in the history of indexes." *The Indexer* 21 (3): 111–18.

Conrad Gessner
the father of bibliography
1516–65

Born in Zurich, Conrad Gessner (aka Konrad von Gessner) became professor of Greek at Lausanne in 1537, and of Physics and Natural History in 1541. He published 72 works and left 18 others in progress, writing on botany, medicine, mineralogy and philology, and compiling elaborate indexes for his own works: “a man who personified the renaissance ideal of the humanist as a universal scholar.”¹ First and foremost, though, he was a physician and naturalist, and in his earliest botanical works he sought to bring order to the chaotic state to which the study of botany had been reduced. His *Historia plantarum* of 1541 was an alphabetically arranged dictionary of plant names, with brief descriptions of each plant, provided with a name and subject index referring to pages, in strict alphabetical order. His *Catalogus plantarum* of 1542 was a more systematic display of plant names, with the main sequence in Latin accompanied across the opening of two pages by their equivalents in Greek, German, French, and Latin trade names—both a terminological and a typographical innovation. Gessner also provided a separate index of Latin and Greek names found in the works of Dioscorides.²

Gessner compiled the first title indexes in the modern sense. His *Bibliotheca universalis*, published in 1545, lists, annotates and evaluates 12,000 works, and led to his being designated “the father of bibliography.” The first part contains two alphabetical lists of its 3,000 authors, with an index compiled by Robert Constantin. The second part, the *Pandectae*, is a classified arrangement of these books: a first attempt at the universal classification of all the arts and sciences.³ His *Pandectarum . . . libri XXI* of 1548 includes advice on the compilation of library catalogues, lists of indexes to scholarly works known in his time, and detailed instructions on the making of excerpts for scientific works as well as the first known instructions for preparing indexes. He recommended citing not only the number of the leaf (later of the page) but also the position of an indexed item on the page.⁴

Gessner's *Historia animalium* was published in five volumes from 1551 to 54, and included indexes to the names of four-footed animals in Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, German, French, Spanish, English, Polish, Russian and Czech, all printed in separate sequences by language; the Greek and Hebrew names were shown in the original scripts, Arabic and Persian were partially transliterated, partially rendered in Hebrew letters. All entries were alphabetized letter by letter. These were the first multilingual and multiscript indexes.⁵

His *Epitome bibliothecae Conradi Gesneri*, published in Zurich in 1555, has an *Index rerum et nominum*, "an analytical index tabulating alphabetically names of persons, appellations of things, and titles of books", which is superbly done.⁶

1. Wellisch, Hans H. (1984) *Conrad Gessner: A bio-bibliography*. 2nd edition. Zug: Inter Documentation Co. AG.
2. Wellisch, Hans H. (1978) Early multilingual and multiscript indexes in herbals. *The Indexer* 11 (2): 81–102
3. Wellisch, (1984).
4. Wellisch, Hans H. (1996). *Indexing from A to Z*. 2nd edition. New York: H. W. Wilson. 284
5. Wellisch, (1978).
6. Wellisch, *ibid*.

Joseph Justus Scaliger

master of classics

1540–1609

Scaliger, a traveller fluent in thirteen languages, was a professor at Calvin's College in Geneva, later at Leyden University, and editor of major classical works of scholarship. In 1601 he received an urgent note from the publisher Hieronymus Commelin in Heidelberg, who was publishing Janus Gruterus's *Inscriptiones antiquae totius orbi Romani*, telling him that the book contained 1000 folio pages, was typeset and printed, and asking Scaliger to provide the index. Scaliger undertook the task, and worked on it for ten months full time. He wrote on sheets of paper with a four-column layout, densely written words in alphabetical order followed by roman and arabic numbers (rather than using slips). He finally produced an index of 200 folio pages, which was regarded by scholars as a masterpiece. On sending the completed index to the publisher, he wrote, "I have sent on the index. I have forbidden that mention of me be made."—a strange reticence, as he described the index as "*anima illius corporis*" ("soul of the body"); and an early example of the self-effacement by indexers suggested by David Crystal above.

C. D.