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Reviews

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Bernard M. Rosenthal, Berkeley, first edition, 1990, 1990. Book Condition: New. Printed wrappers, 8vo, 26 cm, iii, 209 pp From the publisher's prospectus: "Present-day information science is generally regarded as a novelty springing directly from the recent advances in technology, electronics and computer sophistication. It is shown here that 'Bibliography', for centuries the chief means for recording, organizing and disseminating awareness and knowledge of available information, is clearly the forerunner of our present-day information science. Professor Balsamo traces its evolution from its medieval beginnings to ca.1900, and describes its role in the development of scholarship, literature, science, politics and ecclesiastical policy. In so doing, Balsamo firmly places Bibliography in a historical and cultural context. The compilers' intentions as well as their methods of gathering bibliographical information are viewed against the societal climate of their period, and the uses (and abuses) of this informational tool are analyzed at length. A detailed Index of Names concludes the volume. This is the first comprehensive work in English to place Bibliography in the broad historical framework which it deserves. In a lengthy Bibliographic Note (pp 183-200), Balsamo directs the reader to more specialized works and assesses the contribution of numerous scholars to the History of Bibliography. Most of this pertinent literature is in languages other than English -- one of the reasons for this may be that the Anglo-American approach to Bibliography has for a very long time been rooted in the McKerrow/Greg/Bowers tradition with its emphasis on analytical bibliography and textual criticism. Balsamo's wide-ranging study of the cultural roots and development of bibliographical methods and their place in society should appeal to a wide audience: historians, scholars of Information Science, librarians, faculty and students in Schools of Library Science, bibliophiles, members of the book trade, and anyone interested in the history of the book...

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