

Resources Handbook

A Handbook of American Library Resources, 2d ed. By William Vernon Jackson. Champaign, Ill.: Distributed by the Illinois Union Bookstore, 1962. 88p. \$3.25.

This paperbound, lithoprinted revision of a compilation first issued in 1955 is designed to provide supplementary data to be used in connection with a course in resources of American libraries which has been taught at the Graduate School of Library Science of the University of Illinois since 1945. The data were mostly copied or adapted from a great variety of widely scattered sources.

The compilation does bring together a considerable amount of interesting statistical information dealing principally with aspects of higher education, library finance, library growth, and library cooperation. Having such data pruned, brought up to date, and augmented should prove useful to library school instructors and students. The fifty-three statistical tables and six figures are of the *World-Almanac* type, that is, they are presented without interpretation or indication as to why they have been selected. It might have been useful to group the tables under broad subheadings indicative of the structure of the course content. Such a structure is revealed by the broad classification of the selective bibliography of 407 items, which forms Part II of the compilation. Both the tables and the bibliography appear to have been carefully and conscientiously prepared. However, terse critical annotations would have enhanced the value of the bibliography.

The term "Handbook" in the title of the publication may lead some prospective users to expect more substantive information on American library resources than they will find in statistical tables of expenditures, number of acquisitions, distribution of book stocks, or cost estimates for union catalogs. One might expect, for instance, descriptions of subject concentration or dispersion among libraries. The preface makes it clear that Professor Jackson had no such aims in mind, except to provide general bibliographic

pointers to the relevant literature. The compilation might have been more accurately and more modestly entitled "Statistics and References Relating to American Library Resources."

Some of the impressions gained in perusing the booklet are (1) that research libraries vary greatly in holdings, rate of growth, allocation of funds, etc.; (2) that the relative position of different libraries with regard to these aspects can change substantially over a period of years; (3) that cooperative efforts among research libraries have progressed to some extent but have a long way yet to go; and (4) that American library resources are quite unevenly distributed.—*Robert Muller, University of Michigan Libraries.*

Chinese Beginnings

Written on Bamboo and Silk; the Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions. By Tsuen-Hsuei Tsien. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962. 233p. (The University of Chicago Studies in Library Science) \$7.50.

Mr. Tsien, associate professor of Chinese and librarian of the Far Eastern library of the University of Chicago, has drawn on archaeological evidence buttressed by the critical use of ancient literature in the preparation of *Written on Bamboo and Silk*, a study of Chinese writing from its beginnings to 700. The emphasis is on the nature of the materials and their appearance. There is a chapter on the fluids and tools used in writing. Mr. Tsien also discusses the quantity of the writings preserved, the types of records on the various materials, and their uses in the study of Chinese civilization and the development of Chinese characters.

Religious inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells are the earliest surviving Chinese writings. Large numbers of them from the period between 1400 and, roughly, 1150 B.C. have been found. During the succeeding Chou dynasty (1122?—256 B.C.) inscriptions on bronze predominate. The most interesting as well as the longest of the bronze in-

scriptions are records of political and social events or legal documents. Stone, which succeeded bronze, was used primarily to insure preservation of canonical Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist texts. Jade, clay, and other metals besides bronze were also inscribed.

The earliest Chinese books were made of strips and tablets of wood and bamboo tied together by two cords. No examples survive before the fifth or sixth century B.C. although ancient literature records that book production flourished several centuries earlier. Books were also made of silk and, of course, paper following its invention by the Chinese in the second century.

The invention of paper, the various kinds of paper and their methods of manufacture are well covered, but the finished product, the book, is treated very scantily, apart from the question of format. Mr. Tsien does not tell us about the size of editions, the means of their production, book distribution, the concept of authorship, and other such matters of interest to librarians. This volume in the University of Chicago Studies in Library Science is of interest, therefore, primarily to archaeologists and students of Chinese civilization. Perhaps in a future volume in this series Mr. Tsien will write a work on the early history of the book in China as exhaustive as this is on early Chinese inscriptions and book materials.—*Kenneth E. Carpenter, Bowdoin College Library.*

Russian Librarianship

Technical Information in the U.S.S.R. By Aram S. Melik-Shakhnazarov. Translated by Boris I. Gorokhoff. *Bibliographic Problems in the Natural Sciences; Reports Delivered at the VI Scientific Conference of the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Leningrad, March 2-4, 1960.* Translated by Adam Hakane. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries. Library Monographs Nos. 3 & 4). Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries, 1961, 1962. 122, 113p. \$1.60, \$2.88 (paper).

It is refreshing to a librarian to find Russian books on librarianship or related subjects translated into English. This treatment of technical literature is common enough in chemistry, physics, or aeronautics, but prac-

tically unheard of in the library field. Our knowledge of Soviet libraries and library techniques has in the past come from reports of touring librarians or from surveys by experts such as Horecky or Gorokhoff. If the trend set by the two books reviewed here continues, we may expect someday to have cover-to-cover translations of *Biblioteka* and *Sovetskaia Bibliografiia*.

MIT has sponsored two works quite different from each other yet fascinating in what they both reveal of institutions, people, methods, and attitudes in Soviet librarianship. One book is a manual written for the guidance of information personnel in Soviet industry. The other is a collection of papers delivered at a nationally important conference attended by 170 scientists and librarians.

Technical Information in the U.S.S.R. is the manual for industrial information workers. As might be expected from the competence he displayed in his own book, *Publishing in the U.S.S.R.*, Boris I. Gorokhoff makes a good translator in this subject field. In the first half of his book, Melik-Shakhnazarov identifies and describes the major information agencies and bibliographic sources of importance to the Soviet technical librarian. This is a clear, concise presentation which will no doubt become a handy and valuable reference for some American librarians.

The second half of the book outlines the duties and techniques of Soviet information specialists in the dissemination of technical information. Much of this will seem familiar to American special librarians, but, to a degree unknown in this country, the Soviet librarian must play a large role in promoting new industrial techniques, popularizing science, stimulating production-line morale, introducing new standards, and achieving production goals. The Soviet industrial librarian's teaching, promotion, and oral-communication responsibilities make him an active organizer of such strange-sounding activities as special days for innovators, assistance to lagging brigades, planning for multiskill brigades, and workers' excursions to other plants. A final brief chapter looks wistfully to the prospects of greater mechanization in information work. There are eight supplements of varying interest.

Bibliographic Problems in the Natural Sciences contains six papers delivered by