

Austria's Historical Bibliography - information and documentation in the field of history

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current research

AUSTRIA'S HISTORICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY - INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION IN THE FIELD OF HISTORY

The introduction of a computer-aided information service for several scientific subjects has proved to be a considerable benefit of scientific work even in Austria in the last few years. In the field of the Arts, the teaching and disclosure of literature has also begun to make its way in that manner. However, this cannot be done by chance by some sort of doubling the procedure, but it necessitates a series of analyses and tests according to the entirely different preconditions of those scientific fields.

In order to build up such an information service it seems first of all advisable to work out a suitable stock of data and, if necessary, to make use of already existing stocks. For Austria's science of history there exists such a large stock of already continuously assembled literary data in the form of the "Österreichische Historische Bibliographie" (Austrian Historical Bibliography) (ÖHB). This series was conventionally printed for the reported years 1965-1976. It was the basis for a computer-aided IUT (Institute of Educational Technology) activity which was technologically enabled by means of the programming system MODOK developed at the Institut für Maschinelle Dokumentation (Institute of Mechanical Documentation) (IMD) in Graz.

The editing and publishing of the ÖHB aim at the bibliographic presentation of the scientific production of Austria's science of history in the Austrian federal territory within the borders of the Second Republic, at its documentation and objective disclosure. In the ÖHB, all monographies, all serials, all articles in celebrating publications, compilations, journals, periodicals, in collections of essays, catalogues, reports from congresses and meetings as well as theses, dissertations and inaugural dissertations as well as personal and subject bibliographies are listed. Since 1978 all such literary data have been transferred to the data bank at the Institut für Maschinelle Dokumentation and supplemented by the literary data of the reported time from 1945-1964. The data bank, therefore, comprises the production of Austria's science of history since 1945 as far as its publications have been published in Austria.

Apart from the storage of authors, titles and classification of contributions, a unity also contains details about contents, catchwords and categories from the title and others disclosed from the contributions as well as names of persons and places that occur in the title or in an included contribution, topographical terms, details about the geographic classification, details about regional and/or political units, dates mentioned, references to organisations, to complex historical events or defined and established facts and, finally, in single cases even lemmata, paraphrasing as "catchwords" overlapping concepts (as e.g. social history, museology, population etc.). A thesaurus that proceeds from the experience in disclosing subject matter is being prepared, and the intensive compilation of such a

lexicon will be one of the main tasks in the further development. In doing so, the technical terminology, the definitions and their changes have to be taken into account under constant supervision and control of the criteria of the disclosure of the documented literature.

Besides such details, any formal modalities occurring in the title will also be considered. Thus, the literary data contain all formal bibliographic particulars. It is, for instance, possible to get information on the kind of document, as e.g. monography, series, journal, celebrating publication, catalogue, report, thesis, dissertation, inaugural dissertation. The formal scheme of including a title permits quick inquiries even about formal criteria and offers all possibilities of working out formal registers and - which is more important - also cumulative subject indices and special thematic registers of literature or establishing an information service. Especially the latter is, after all, a cardinal point in the efforts of creating such a data bank.

By the end of 1981, it comprised 60.000 entries, all stored in the above-mentioned form. About 45.000 entries belong to the years 1965-1980, almost 18.000 to the years 1945-1964.

An essential component in the compilation of these bibliographic units is a clearly classified scheme of categories determining the contents of single bibliographic elements (categories). This lexicon was developed in imitation of existing systems; it uses a three-digit code (characterization of categories) to characterize single spheres of data. Such characterizations are then used to control print programs and tracing programs. To make the contents accessible - which is of essential importance to the information service - a number of subject categories are available. At the moment, catchwords are at free disposal; yet, with the conclusion of work at the thesaurus this disposal will largely be settled. In addition to this possibility, a classification scheme was developed simplifying for the documentarist the assignment of a document to an epoch, to a geographic region etc. by means of a classification code. Feeding into the data bank is done by means of OCR (optical character reader). This form of feeding in was chosen because the inclusion is not made at the place of data processing and the necessary equipment (IBM-typewriters) is relatively cheap. Moreover the feeding-in medium for the computer is also proof of inclusion. Special marks as e.g. accents, caudae and others can be coded comfortably. Correcting possibilities are extremely comfortable.

By means of the technological possibilities at the Institut für Maschinelle Dokumentation it will be possible to offer an information service for the science of history. Users of this service may make their inquiries of the relevant official (historian) personally, in writing or by telephone. Generally, a short analysis of the problem is necessary in order to determine the thematic tracing terms. It is, however, a matter of course that the printed publication of

the ÖHB will continue to be indispensable since it is just in history that technical literature as the most important historical source as such for its part time and again has a share in determining the progress and development of research. Yet, the data bank, on hand enables a speedy more thorough access to special information. Likewise it offers in this way a possibility to join international or other national information systems and to store the Austrian contribution even there.

In cooperation with experts and information specialists, the requirements were met and the developmental work was done to raise hopes that even in the field of the Arts (where the science of history is to serve just as a model) we have basically succeeded in providing research with the frequently requested "quick, unproblematic and effective availability of its literature."

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