

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-