

Book Reviews

Library Surveys. By Maurice B. Line. [Hamden, Conn.] Archon Books, and Clive Bingley [1967]. 146p. \$5.50.

The last book on the general subject of library surveys appeared as an integrated topic in 1940. This was *The Library Survey*, written by Errett W. McDiarmid, Jr., and published by the American Library Association. Mr. Line's book may mark the appearance of other books on the subject. The present reviewer and Irlene Roemer Stephens have edited a volume titled identically, issued in November by the Columbia University Press (Maurice F. Tauber and Irlene Roemer Stephens (eds.)). *Library Surveys*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967. xix, 286p. [Studies in Library Service, Number 6]. This latter volume is a collection of papers prepared for a conference in New York in June 1965. Since it is quite different from Mr. Line's work, it is mentioned only in passing. Similarities appear in such areas as: reasons for and types of surveys, selecting surveyors, weighing the results, and in implementing the studies.

The book by Mr. Line, who is deputy librarian of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, is designed to aid librarians in their use, planning, procedure, and presentation of surveys. Mr. Line asks the fundamental question of whether or not a survey by an outsider is necessary for a particular situation. This is an academic question, however, as Mr. Line indicates rather clearly that surveys of libraries—individual units or systems—serve the same purpose as consultantships in other fields—medicine, law, engineering, business, industry, and government. Thus, libraries, like other enterprises, need re-examination constantly. The use of self-surveys is acknowledged, and this is a way of evaluating the status of a particular situation.

However, the use of the self-survey raises a delicate question that cannot be answered without reference to a specific institution. There have been excellent self-surveys at various libraries and of library systems, and an efficient director expects "self-surveying" to be a constant approach to improvement.

The caution of "pitfalls" in the approach of the outside surveyor is well taken, but this is true in any professional relationship when outside aid is sought.

Mr. Line reviews the various types of surveys—over-all surveys of a country's libraries, or of the resources of the libraries of a country, or of specific areas of a library such as its income and expenditure, stock, buildings and equipment, administration and technical processes and activities, staff, use of the library, and background. He points out that "no library operation should be considered in isolation."

The "Planning of Surveys" is given careful attention, since it is quite clear that unless the limits of a study are carefully defined, the survey may take an inordinate amount of time and result in imprecise findings. Sampling is quite important in any aspect of the survey, and Mr. Line provides the reader with reminders of adequacy of samples in such areas as use, operations, and resources. He calls attention to the need for repeated surveys after intervals for purposes of comparison. Indeed, there are a number of libraries in the United States which have had several surveys just for this purpose.

Such matters as proper timing, support, selection of the surveyors, costs, and the utilization of opinions of users are aspects discussed by the author. In collecting the information, the gamut of observation, questionnaires, rating scales, interviews, and other procedures normally used in surveys is considered. The problems of questionnaires are given extended treatment.

Chapters IV and V of the volume deal with processing and analysis of survey data, and interpretation and presentation, respectively. The inclusion of proper coding applications, when pertinent, will allow for easier analysis of data when the report is prepared. Mr. Line refers in some detail to punched card and computer approaches. Tabular presentations are considered, and statistical measures, including correlations, are offered as possible instruments for interpretation. The author also suggests that the surveyor must be careful of bias in any response, and that awareness of internal

inconsistencies in answers should be associated with some suspicion. The caution that the author expresses in the interpretation of data, of course, is incumbent upon the surveyor, if the report is to be acceptable to the unit surveyed.

The author uses both British and American sources in his presentation, which should give it a wider audience. In an appendix, he suggests several practical examples of studies that could be made, with some direction as to factors involved, as well as methods of collecting data. A useful index makes it possible to locate specific topics included in this work, which should be helpful to surveyors and surveyed alike. —*Maurice F. Tauber, Columbia University.*

Victor Scholderer, *Fifty Essays in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Bibliography*. Edited by Dennis E. Rhodes. Amsterdam: Hertzberger, 1966. 302p.

Most of these *Fifty Essays*, the qualifying statement of the title notwithstanding, deal with the printed book of the fifteenth century. To the uninitiated or nonspecialist such supposedly narrow scope could be a deterrent; we therefore hasten to say that the variety of problems treated is great, ranging from purely typographical investigations to questions of authorship, identity and life of printers, analysis of the production of presses, or printing and reading in Italy. Those who are familiar with Mr. Scholderer's work can take it for granted that every one, even the smallest, of his articles reflects solid scholarship, originality, and good style.

The title hides the fact that the volume contains fifty-four of the 221 entries in Dennis E. Rhodes' "Bibliography" of V.S. (pp.15-29); Mr. Scholderer's poem "Death of Virgil" (p.9); his essay on the "Private Diary of Robert Proctor" (pp.31-37); a brief but warm foreword by Sir Frank Francis, as well as an introduction (pp.13-14), the aforementioned bibliography, and two indexes (pp.295-302) by the editor. Twenty-eight of the *Essays* appeared originally in *The Library*, sixteen in the *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*. The rest had been published in nine different places. For reasons unexplained no contribution from the *British Museum Quarterly* was included.

It is impractical to enter into a discussion

of so many articles. The following remarks are random observations and reactions. Three contributions analyze the book production of Italian centers of printing, Venice to the end of 1481 (p.74-89); Ferrara (pp.91-95); and Milan (pp.96-105). The activity of printers and publishers inevitably reflects intellectual climate and economic conditions. These articles originally published in 1925-1927 shed interesting light on the spread of Humanism, the business acumen of printers, and the effect of competition and overproduction.

"The Invention of Printing" (pp.156-168), published in celebration of the five hundredth anniversary (1941), is one of the best available summaries on this subject. The author's own note takes cognizance of Carl Wehmer's later findings on the so-called "astronomical calendar for 1448," which is more fully discussed on pp.229-31. The following article (pp.169-78), entitled "Early Printed Books," reviews the basic work of major incunabulists from Henry Bradshaw to World War II, dealing with such outstanding members of the guild as Robert Proctor, Konrad Burger, Gordon Duff, Konrad Haebler, Dietrich Reichling, and Anatole Claudin. Have these men and their similarly eminent colleagues (among them Victor Scholderer) exhausted the problems of early printing to such an extent that little has been left to following generations or, and this is presumably more correct, have present training and the pressure of other duties created conditions which are much less favorable to research in depth than in earlier periods?

In his article on the *Missale speciale Constantiense* (pp.253-57), Mr. Scholderer presents a measured survey of the various theories pertaining to this famous book, thought by some to ante-date the printing of the 42-line Bible. His study was written in 1955, and the controversy continued thereafter. Here, as in a few other cases, the editor added his own note, referring to the latest investigation (Allan Stevenson's) which purports to prove beyond doubt that the *Missale* was printed as late as 1473.

It is this reviewer's feeling that the reprinting in one volume of articles by foremost specialists is highly desirable and a great timesaver to scholars. Perhaps this volume might be followed by other similar