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 be-
gun 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 Histo-
rische 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 pre-
sentation of the scientific production of Austria's science of his-
tory 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 con-
tributions, a unity also contains details about contents, catchwords
and categories from the title and others disclosed from the contribu-
tions 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 li-
terature.

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 in-
formation on the kind of document, as e.g. monography, series, jour-
nal, celebrating publication, catalogue, report, thesis, disser-
tation, 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-di-
git 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, catch-
words 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 indispensible since it is just in his-
tory that technical literature as the most important historical
source as such for its part time and again has a share in deter-
mining the progress and development of research. Yet, the data
bank, on hand enables a speedy more thorough access to special in-
formation. 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 re-
quirements 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, un-
problematic and effective availability of its literature."

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