Organization of Serials and Documents

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DURING THE POSTWAR period several trends in the organization of serials and documents have been discernible. The most noticeable point toward the study and adoption of procedures designed to eliminate wasteful duplication in records pertaining to serials; a continuing search for practical means of giving collections of government publications maximum effectiveness; the increasing use of bibliographic controls as aids in acquisition as well as means to implement and supplement existing records; the revival and extension of cooperative movements leading to the acquisition of serials and documents by exchange; and the growing acceptance of microphotography to meet problems connected with the storage of certain categories of material which must be preserved, and with the securing of publications not readily obtainable in printed form.

The challenge to maintain essential library services in the face of rapidly rising costs has made some of these trends evident internationally. The policies and procedures adopted to attain the maximum service at the least operating expense have been greatly influenced by recognition of the important place which the increasing numbers of publications of governments, societies, and institutions occupy in the collections of contemporary libraries.

Consolidation of Records for Serials. The concept of the central serial record is not a new one. In the years immediately preceding World War II experiments in the central registering of such materials had been made in the United States. Much of the current development of central serial records has its background in statements made and programs of action outlined by J. H. Gable,1 A. F. Kuhlman,2 and F. B. Rothman and Sidney Ditzion3 during the period 1937 through 1940. In 1951, G. N. Hartje reported on the general status of central recording as follows: "There is no general agreement among writers

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on the assignment of the responsibility for ordering serials, the location
of records, types of records or distribution of serials. However, prac-
tically all agree with Gable on the desirability and feasibility of setting
up a separate serials department and upon the general principles in-
volved. There is also virtual unanimity of opinion that four records
should be kept—holdings, current receipts, payment, and binding—and
that they should be kept together. . . . 4

While it is possible to trace a current movement to establish central
serial records in libraries, particularly in the United States, it has not
been characterized by concerted action. The reasons lie chiefly in
hesitancy to abandon long established procedures, shortages of funds
and staff to make the necessary change-over, lack of space in which
to accommodate new operating units, and most of all, scarcity of ex-
perience sufficiently impressive to provide the necessary guidance.

At present this final reason is less compelling than it was, in view
of what has been written during the last five years concerning the
organization and success of consolidated records, notably at West
Virginia University,6 the United Kingdom Department of Scientific
and Industrial Research,6 the Linda Hall Library of Science and Tech-
nology,7 the Library of Congress,8 and the Ohio State University.9
These accounts range from the description of the relatively simple
operation put into effect in the newly organized Linda Hall Library,
to the highly complex procedures made necessary at the Library of
Congress when the work of consolidating and reorganizing its de-
centralized serial records was begun in 1941. There is no doubt that,
for some time to come, the experience of the Library of Congress in
establishing its new system of serial recording will serve as a unique
aid to administrators and staff seeking to meet the needs of their re-
spective institutions.

Those who are responsible for setting up the operation of serial
records have been faced with two major policy decisions. One con-
cerns the type of equipment in which they are to be housed, and the
other the form of entry to be used on the cards and slips which com-
prise them. Until 1952 the consensus was that the visible file was
the best container. Hartje gave a detailed report on the details of
visible and nonvisible equipment, stressing the strong and weak points
of each kind.10 The case for the use of nonvisible equipment is
strengthened by an account of recent experimentation at the library
of the United States Department of Agriculture. The results indicate
a rising trend in productivity on the part of the serial checkers work-
Organizing under the new controlled conditions, as well as easier use of the files by other staff members.\textsuperscript{11}

As for the form of entry to be adopted in central serial records, it is difficult to judge whether the interest expressed has been aroused in part by current trends in thinking about cataloging, or whether it has grown out of actual difficulties encountered. The problems connected with the use of simplified entries are especially challenging to those libraries which do not maintain separate document collections, and which accordingly have integrated the records for document serials under country and corporate author with those issued by nonofficial bodies.

It seems evident that, in the beginning, those who advocated the exclusive use of simplified forms for checking entries of corporate bodies had in mind the principles of the German code of cataloging. The differences between the Anglo-American and the German codes on this point have been stated by Marga Franck in the following terms: "While the Anglo-American code agrees on recognizing societies, institutions, etc. as authors of their publications, the German code adheres to the thesis that only persons may be regarded as authors and that publications of societies, institutions, etc. are to be classed with anonyma and therefore to be entered under title."\textsuperscript{12} Since the majority of personnel attached to serial checking units for operational purposes is not professionally trained, some administrators and supervisors have advocated simplification of entry for the publications of corporate bodies in line with the principles of the German code, to the end that the checkers would be able to identify more readily the items in the record from the piece in hand.

In 1951, when the United Nations Library undertook the organization of its permanent central serial checking record, every effort was made to benefit from the advantages of the simplified check-list entry, while at the same time there were combined with it the elements of the catalog entry to insure rapid identification. Thus, official serials are entered under geographic or political area, followed by the title on the visible part of the cover card; while the place name is repeated on the under side, and after it comes that of the issuing agency. Unofficial serials, including government periodicals, appear under title, followed by indication of issuing agency if appropriate.\textsuperscript{13}

However, the case for simplified entries in general has been reopened by the decision at the Library of Congress in 1952 to abandon the policy it had adopted two years previously, and to return to the
forms of entry prescribed by the American Library Association rules. The reason for the reversal defines what seems to be the basic problem of many libraries in this respect. "These entries did not produce the economies predicted, but, on the contrary, resulted in time-consuming confusion and conflict with other records of the Library." 14

Organization and Implementation of Document Collections. The question whether a document collection not subject to security measures can be most effectively used where it is kept together and administered as a unit, or, on the other hand, where its contents are classed with unofficial works dealing with the same subject, has never been fully answered. In the area of United States government publications, this matter was discussed with inconclusive results in a group of four papers presented at a meeting of the Public Documents Committee of the American Library Association in the summer of 1950.15

Since the records of a document collection maintained as a unit are relatively uncomplicated, the difficulties of its organization inhere chiefly in devising a classification scheme sufficiently flexible to accommodate the publications of issuing bodies on various levels, and representing more than one government or international organization.16 In 1952 such a system, purely alphabetic in plan, based entirely on standard corporate author headings, using a notation consisting of several Cutter numbers for each item, and compounded to express the alphabetic arrangement, was put into successful operation in the library of the University of New Mexico.17

The organization, administration, and use of document collections kept together as units and consisting of the publications of more than one government have been outlined and discussed in monographs by Anne E. Markley and Ellen Jackson.18 Both have emphasized the current tendencies toward the limited cataloging of such collections and the use of existing bibliographies to implement the necessary control records. Earlier discussions of these trends are to be found in papers sponsored by the Public Documents Committee of the American Library Association in 1950.19

In the postwar era two groups of documents have been brought forcibly to the attention of the library world. They are those commonly known as technical research reports and those pertaining to the work of international governmental organizations. The contents of these documents, the conditions of their use, and in some instances their actual physical form, have often made it expedient, if not ac-
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tually obligatory, to maintain them in collections entirely distinct from the other holdings of the libraries possessing them.

Of technical research reports it is said “A new and important body of technical literature is arising parallel to an existing body in the fields of science and engineering. This new literature is largely separate because of mode of origin and security restrictions, and much of it has not yet been absorbed into university libraries.” The maintenance of adequate records and control procedures on security classified reports is an operational problem of the greatest importance. The bibliographical services for the collection and dissemination of information on technical and scientific research in the United States have been substantially strengthened and increased in recent years through the efforts of agencies within the federal government.

The trends in the acquisition, processing, and reference use of report literature were sufficiently evident in 1952 to make welcome the sessions of an Institute on the Administration and Use of Technical Research Reports of the Science-Technology Division of the Special Libraries Association in New York in May of that year. The papers presented constitute a contribution to knowledge in a relatively new field of documentation.

The limiting of the use of most report literature to a necessarily restricted clientele has made its organization in collections the preoccupation of a relatively small group of librarians. The reverse is true of the unrestricted documents and publications of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the distribution of which is on a world-wide basis.

The need for bibliographical controls over the documentation of the United Nations was recognized by the Organization at a very early stage. The interest was intensified because the League of Nations had never established such controls except through the catalogs of sales publications. Although perfected by Marie J. Carroll, these still are incomplete as a bibliographical aid, since the voluminous League documentation not intended for sales purposes is omitted.

The need for means whereby United Nations documents could be acquired and organized effectively was also expressed by outside institutions and groups. During 1947 three conferences devoted to the distribution of documentary material were held in New York at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, under the sponsorship of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the World Peace Foundation. Matters relating to documents of the United Nations and
specialized agencies were discussed at each of the meetings.\footnote{28} In 1948, during the sessions of the United Nations Third General Assembly in Paris, a conference attended by delegates from ten European countries, together with officials of the United Nations, was held at the Paris office of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. At that session a series of recommendations on the distribution of United Nations documents and about their servicing and bibliographical implications was formulated.\footnote{29}

In the years named and those following, persons having access to the complete documentation of the United Nations were making every effort to provide bibliographical and other aids to implement it both retrospectively and currently. The first major tangible result is the check list of United Nations documents undertaken by the United Nations Library in 1948. The first four fascicles were published in 1949. The project involves a retrospective bibliography by organs and sessions, covering the years 1946 to 1949, inclusive. At the time of writing seventeen sections of this series have been published.\footnote{30} When completed the entire project will contain nineteen parts in thirty-three fascicles. The *United Nations Documents Index*, published monthly since 1950, lists, describes, and indexes by subjects all of the unrestricted documents and publications of the specialized agencies received in the United Nations Library.\footnote{31}

In 1951, on the basis of experience, the United Nations Library found itself in a position to give constructive advice as to the most effective and economical means whereby the documents of the Organization could be of the maximum use where they were assembled in a separate collection. This was done in the form of papers written by Fernando Caballero-Marsal, Harry N. M. Winton, and Jorgen K. Nielsen, three members of the library staff.\footnote{32} One year later, in 1952, Carol C. Moor and Waldo Chamberlin \footnote{33} of New York University issued their manual on the use of United Nations documents by research scholars and librarians having charge of full collections. Its most valuable feature is a bibliography containing references to complete works and periodical articles, intended to orient and guide those concerned with the organization and reference use of documents in the international field.\footnote{34}

While it is true that a considerable number of libraries throughout the world find need for full sets of unrestricted United Nations documents and publications, as well as those of the specialized agencies, there also is a group of institutions desiring to acquire such material
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on a highly selective basis. In many instances it is their practice to add the publications to already established collections of official and non-official works.

In the spring of 1953 the United Nations Library and the Library of Congress initiated together an enterprise whereby the former will select United Nations printed and processed documents and publications in all language versions that are believed to be of substantial and lasting interest, and the latter will catalog the materials promptly and will sell the printed cards at the usual card prices. Such a service should assist those interested in acquiring materials from the United Nations on a basis of selectivity, and at the same time "will provide many libraries with an economical solution to the problem of cataloging essential UN documents." 35

Bibliographical Controls as Aids to the Acquisition and Organization of Serials and Documents. Attention to the potential use of bibliographical controls as aids to the acquisition and organization of serials and documents is apparent in areas other than those pertaining to collections of material previously noted in this paper. The Conference on International Cultural, Educational, and Scientific Exchanges held at Princeton, New Jersey, in November of 1946 recommended "that UNESCO and other suitable agencies and groups, governmental and nongovernmental, encourage national governments, national library associations, and other agencies in every country to see to it that there is published for each country a current national bibliography. . . ." 36 It was advised further that such bibliographies should include government documents at all levels, as well as nongovernment periodicals and newspapers.

Although this much desired objective has not as yet been fully realized, the resurgence of activity in the over-all field of bibliography since the close of World War II is a movement of the greatest significance to the world of scholarship and research. A portion of the bibliographical output is of unique importance as a means of control in the acquisition and processing of recently issued official and non-official serials. To be of value in their restricted capacity such aids must be current, since timeliness is essential. One noticeable trend is the increase in the number of what are sometimes described in general terms as handlists. They are variously compiled according to regional holdings, place of origin, issuing body, language, subject, and form. In addition to being distinguished by one or more of the foregoing, they may be the accessions lists of libraries of individual
institutions or government agencies. The nature of their format permits wide circulation, and when they are issued in serial form their value is cumulative. At present they constitute one of the best sources of current information regarding contemporary serials and documents. The recognition of the value of timeliness in compilations of this sort is to be seen in the decision to enlarge the scope of the *Serial Titles Newly Received*, published by the Library of Congress, thus making it possible for the successive issues and cumulations of this periodical to serve as a current supplement to the *Union List of Serials*.40

On a long term basis, current developments in the organization of union lists contribute material bibliographical assistance to the organization of serials. E. J. Carter reports the development of such lists in card, book, and microfilm form in Canada, India, the Philippines, Egypt, and Uruguay. R. L. Collison states that the growth of the union catalog in Britain has proved so much of a success that many attempts have been made at such compilations, notably in the field of periodicals. One of the important developments of the postwar period has been the *British Union Catalogue of Periodicals*. Another great enterprise—the third edition of the *World List of Scientific Periodicals*—has been completed. It is also known that government libraries in England privately maintain a union catalog of rare and unusual files of periodicals for the use of their readers. In June of 1952 the Joint Committee on the Union List of Serials met with representatives of the Library of Congress to consider a proposal for a National Union Catalog of Serials on cards at the Library of Congress, as a part of the National Union Catalog apparatus.40

In the field of bibliography devoted exclusively to the publications of governments, the retrospective list of bibliographies of official publications issued by Unesco in 1950 is a logical starting point from which to note current developments.43 It is disappointing that so far in the postwar era so few governments have taken measures to improve the form and extent of the bibliographical coverage for their documents. Notable exceptions are those of Canada and France.45, 46 Criticism of His Majesty’s Stationery Office lists from the point of view of reference use has been expressed by Sidney Horrocks.47 Useful information regarding the current official bibliographies, as well as the documents of several Western European countries and of the United States, is to be found in the transactions of the Conference de Documentation held in Paris in 1951.48

In accordance with past practices those concerned with document
acquisition and organization continue to seek out and to collect informative articles and monographs on the subject as a whole to use for their special purposes. For the United States the third edition of Anne M. Boyd's *United States Government Publications*, revised by Rae E. Rips,
 is the standard text, although portions are out of date. E. S. Brown has covered the ground for the United States and some foreign materials in a manual intended primarily for students. M. I. Turnbull has reported on Canadian document acquisition. An article by A. D. Roberts and Fernande P. Wojewodski is the outgrowth of their experience with the use of contemporary French parliamentary documents gained during late 1951 and early 1952 at the time that the United Nations Sixth General Assembly met in Paris. In these same years the official publications of the United Kingdom were the subject of articles written by W. H. Glasscock, Horrocks, and others; and the Library Association has rendered a service by publishing lectures given in 1951 by librarians, archivists, and information specialists from the major ministries of the British government at the School of Librarianship and Archives of the University of London.

Revival and Extension of Cooperative Movements Leading to the Acquisition of Serials and Documents by Exchange. The organized exchange of official documents and scientific and literary publications on an international level has existed ever since the middle of the nineteenth century. The arrangements for such exchanges imply that only certain categories of material regularly available will be transmitted. Thus the movement of unwanted duplicates, as such, is precluded. L. J. Kipp, in his report of programs within the United States government for exchange with Latin America, has presented much of the historical background, as well as the current status of many aspects of international exchange.

The *Report on the Programme* proposed to the first general conference of Unesco in 1947 stated that Unesco's clearinghouse for publications should not be merely an organization to hand out spare copies of books to applicant libraries; but that it should be the main center for the promotion of direct exchanges throughout the world. This, it was foreseen, would probably be its most important duty. The *Unesco Bulletin for Libraries* has been the means of aiding in the setting up of new exchanges and in reviving older ones which had lapsed during the war period. The *Unesco Handbook on International Exchange of Publications* is an inclusive manual on the subject indicated by its title.
On the national level Unesco has encouraged the establishment of centers such as the United States Book Exchange. This agency, which had as its forerunner the American Book Center for War-Devastated Libraries, has grown steadily in importance and scope of operation since 1949. In 1951-52 the United States Book Exchange took an important step towards its goal of becoming a completely self-supporting service by requiring the payment of service charges by foreign libraries as well as by those in this country. From the beginning one of the unique attractions of U.S.B.E. for the member libraries has been the fact that they could send in their duplicates to a central handling agency, and indicate their needs on specially prepared lists. This aspect of exchange, namely, the moving of duplicates and the receipt of needed items in return, has up until the postwar period been a costly operation for the individual library attempting to dispose of its own material, where the work was undertaken at all. Such successful programs of exchange exist at present among organizations belonging to the special libraries group and the Medical Library Exchange chiefly because of the common interests of the member institutions.

Microreproduction of Serials and Documents. Microreproduction has become a part of “standard operating procedure” for libraries, although its utilization, both in extent and in intent, varies widely. The use has concerned directly the field of serials and documents, and the acceptance of the new medium is one of the important recent movements in librarianship. The changing pattern of research—current rather than historical—referred to by E. B. Power, is perhaps one of the major factors contributing to adoption of microtext.

The reasons for microreproduction have been discussed widely in the literature, and it will suffice here to summarize them briefly. First, microreproduction promotes security. This includes preservation from deterioration and eventual loss, and the provision of multiple copies of unique material as insurance against destruction through accident, war, political action, and the like. Second, microreproduction has merit as a means of acquiring material which is rare for any reason, which is located at some distance, or which has gone out of print and consequently is unavailable. Third, microreproduction provides administrative economy through reducing the amount of space needed for housing and storage and permitting the adding of material which may be obtained more inexpensively through microreproduction than through traditional channels. Fourth, microreproduction may serve as a means of original publication.
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To enumerate completely the serial and document material which has been microreproduced commercially, cooperatively, or by individual libraries, is both unnecessary, due to the existence of numerous lists of various kinds, and impossible, owing to a lack of coordination in the recording of work done. Certain outstanding projects, however, may be mentioned as examples. The Library of Congress undertakings abroad to secure documentary material, and in this country, in cooperation with the University of North Carolina, to secure microcopy of state records, are of primary importance. The Harvard University newspaper microfilming project is an example of cooperative work in securing and preserving foreign newspaper material. Among the publications of the United States government available in microreproduction are the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, decennial census reports, congressional hearings, declassified technical reports, and Supreme Court reports. A commercial firm has undertaken the microprinting of nondepository government publications, beginning with those of January 1953. A similar project is planned for the documentation of the United Nations. American libraries are able to take advantage of microreproduction carried out in other countries in cases such as the microfilming of Swedish newspapers, Canadian parliamentary debates, and current West German newspapers.

Although microreproduction has come into relatively wide use, and is welcomed as a solution to certain problems related to serials and documents, there are few points on which general agreement has been reached. Foremost is the fact that librarians seem not to be certain of what they wish microreproduction to do. To what uses is it to be put? Certain applications are obvious and are being pursued, but are its possibilities being fully realized? What else can it do? No person or committee can sit down to think of all the possible utilizations, but it is essential that the purposes of microreproduction and its possibilities, known and unknown, be kept in mind and studied, and that new avenues be examined. We need the positive "why" approach in addition to the negative one—not otherwise available, not otherwise publishable—which largely has been of interest up to the present. The latter considerations may suggest good reasons, but they do not necessarily indicate good purposes.

The need for cooperation in microreproduction development has repeatedly been stressed, and many of the outstanding projects have been cooperative. Yet there are only the beginnings of coordination, as
distinct from cooperation; and much of the effort at coordination, particularly in Europe and in the international organizations, has been concerned with methods rather than with materials. There are individual library undertakings which for various reasons may not lend themselves to cooperation, but many of the activities carried on by separate libraries could more profitably be conducted on a cooperative basis. Even many of the commercial enterprises have been cooperative in certain of their aspects. The coordination of this activity in microreproduction should first be local or regional, then national, and finally, international. Its essential is planning. Many of the existing schemes (such as the Microfilm Clearing House at the Library of Congress), however valuable, are at least partially post facto coordination, chiefly concerned with recording what is planned and what has been done, and not with directing it. One of the first evidences of coordination and planning has come from the Committee on Cooperative Microfilm Projects in its “Statement of Principles,” and this kind of activity should be extended further. Both content and method are involved.

What, then, is to be reproduced? What is content to be? A fine balance will need to be struck among the various reasons for microreproduction. For example, need for preservation must be weighed against potential usefulness. Priorities may have to be set up to assure that material of first importance is that first reproduced. It may be necessary to work out various “assignments,” nationally and internationally, for distributing equitably the effort and expense involved, and for coordination.

The relation of reproduction to original issue should be evaluated. Can the original publication scheme now in use for many doctoral dissertations and other material be extended further? It has been suggested, for example, that scholarly articles first be put on microcards rather than into journals. What effect would this “disappearance” of some serials have on a library’s serials department?

How is the technical side, or method, to be coordinated? There are rolls, strips, and sheets, and they can be either transparent or opaque; all can come in any one of numerous sizes and shapes. The need for correlation of forms of microreproduction, and the apparatus for using them, has been pointed out. What are the real advantages and limitations of microfilm, microcard, and microprint? What are the relations among sizes of editions, frequency and kinds of use, and the forms of microreproduction to be utilized? Too little objective study
has been made of such points. New forms of reproduction such as Ultrafax and Thermofax, should be investigated, and their possibilities examined and correlated with those of microfilm, microcard, and microprint.

Technical standardization has received considerable attention, although further work needs to be done, particularly on an international basis. The International Federation for Documentation, Unesco, the International Standards Organization, as well as various national groups, have worked on the problem and are continuing their activities. The published FID-Unesco Survey of Microfilm Use and Directory of Microfilm and Photocopying Services, and the forthcoming Manuel de reproduction documentaire et sélection, are examples of what should lead to further technical coordination. In the United States work has been carried on by the American Standards Association, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Center for Scientific Aids to Learning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as by other agencies. Study needs to be pursued to overcome the current handicap of all microreproduction processes in matters of color, certain kinds of illustrations, and tables.

The administration of microreproduction in a library raises further problems. The Library of Congress in its Rules for Descriptive Cataloging has furnished a guide to the technical details of cataloging. It is possible to incorporate cards for microreproductions in the general catalog, or to maintain a separate file. It is possible to classify microtext with the general collection, or to keep it apart, which raises the question of what classification and location is best for the “split” periodical set where microreproduction in some form replaces unobtainable volumes of the original edition. It is possible to have cataloging information directly on the microtext, as with microcards, or laminated to it—catalog card and microtext back to back. For many serials it is now possible to subscribe to the original edition and to a microcopy. Administrative decisions need, therefore, to be made as to whether to acquire and keep the original, and, if kept, for how long. The same is true of a project such as that for the nondepository government publications.

One of the notable features of this project is that the microprint is keyed to the entry numbers of the Monthly Catalog of government publications, and consequently is “self-indexing” to the extent that the Monthly Catalog adequately covers the content of the documents. Would it be useful to consider a similar plan for periodicals? The titles

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in a Wilson index could be microreproduced, and if the entries in the printed index could have serial numbers added, further cataloging and indexing might be dispensed with. Or could these printed tools be eliminated and the indexing be done by a mechanical or electronic tool, such as the Rapid Selector? Interlibrary loan of microtext on much the same basis as for traditional material has been provided for in the new interlibrary loan code, and is considered further in the "Statement of Principles" of the Committee on Cooperative Microfilm Projects.87

There is little information concerning reader reaction, which seems generally unfavorable to microreproduction in cases where there is a choice between that and the original. Experience from one organization suggests that the library clientele might be more generously disposed to microtext if reading apparatus were to be on an "every man can have his own" basis.86 The form of the microreproduction may have an important effect on the reader, and it has been suggested that "in France microfilm is used much more by the reference librarian, the working scientists, the information officer than by their opposite numbers in the U.S."88 The more extensive use in Europe of the easily handled microfilm strip may be the basis for this, and may hold a hint for the profession here.

The microtext of serials may be retrospective or current, and that of documents may represent manuscript or print. Both may be either original publication or reproduction. In any case satisfactory and profitable integration in a library's collection through cataloging and classification depends to a large extent on the successful pursuit of answers to the problems summarized above.

References

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58. Unesco, op. cit., p. 93.

59. Ibid., p. 107.

60. Kipp, op. cit., ref. 57, p. 74.


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