



The Library Press

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THE PERIODICAL LITERATURE

IN VIEW OF the importance of its journal literature to every discipline, and especially in view of the large amount of writing on the bibliographical control, selection, acquisition, organization and technical handling, and general use of periodical literature, it seems astonishing that the library profession has devoted so little attention to library periodicals *per se*. To be sure, during the past quarter-century several hundred editorials, news notes, and queries about the present and future of particular periodicals have appeared. In the same period, however, fewer than a score of papers have dealt in any depth with their history, status or evaluation. No dissertation has done so, nor has any other book-length publication, although there are several relevant master's theses.

Harvey has pointed out that the literature about library periodicals is "almost nonexistent," and has suggested some aspects of the topic that need investigation.¹ In the twenty years since he wrote, several articles and a few studies have appeared, but the number is still very small, the coverage exceedingly spotty, and very little writing treats thoroughly any aspect of the library press; the few notable exceptions are considered hereafter. What is especially lacking is solid historical and evaluative accounts of our principal journals. If only because of a rigid space limitation, the present article by no means fills this important lacuna; it does attempt, however, to provide a serious, objective overview of the most important groups of our journals.

Such an effort is particularly appropriate since this volume celebrates, among other important events in American library history, the centennial of our first professional periodical, the *Library Journal* (LJ). (Unlike numerous other American library "firsts," LJ was not a

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"world first"; Germany produced *Serapeum* from 1840 to 1870, and *Anzeiger fuer Literatur der Bibliothekswissenschaft*, with varying titles, from 1840 to 1886.

It would require a substantial volume, or more likely two or three volumes, to treat fully the history and evaluation of even one-fourth of our journals. The first part of this paper is limited to a discussion of some major types and titles and is divided as follows: (1) the status and scope of the field, (2) literature survey and general evaluation, (3) principal national general-interest journals, (4) state publications, (5) national special-interest journals, and (6) journals of individual libraries other than those of states.

STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FIELD

During the past one hundred years, periodical publications in librarianship have proliferated enormously. One-quarter century after LJ's first appearance, the United States had six additional periodicals. Cannons's *Bibliography of Library Economy*, published in 1927, covered forty-two. The first volume of *Library Literature* covered the period from 1921 to 1932 and indexed sixty-five American journals. LL's figure today is over 125—and it is certain that a much larger proportion of publications is not indexed now than was the case in the first volume of LL or Canons's bibliography. Since up-to-date and inclusive lists of the literature are not published, it is safe to say that no one knows exactly how many periodical publications in librarianship there are today. Based upon the listing in Springman and Brown,² the number must be at least 800 and may well approach 1,000, although a majority of these are not journals in any narrow sense. New titles appear, if not daily or weekly, at least every few weeks. As these lines are written the first issue of the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (JAL) has come to the writer's desk. We have journals covering almost every conceivable aspect, interest, and concern of our field, and every kind of library. Examples of these include: *Journal of Education for Librarianship* (JEL); *Journal of Library History, Philosophy and Comparative Librarianship* (JLH); *Music Library Association Notes* (MLAN); *Law Library Journal* (LLJ); *Association of Hospital and Institution Libraries Quarterly*; *American Theological Library Association Newsletter*; *Microform Review*; the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* (BMLA); the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*; and the *Public Library Trustee*. Most state's libraries have at least one publication, some have two or more. There are publications ad-

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dressed to regional interests, for example, the *Pacific Northwest Library Association Quarterly* and the *Southeastern Librarian*. Many academic libraries publish journals: The *Harvard Library Bulletin*, *Columbia (University's) Library Columns*, and *Huntington Library Quarterly*. The *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, although primarily a house organ, regularly contains much of interest to the profession at large. There are even journals based upon religious orientation, such as *Catholic Library World*.

A considerable number of writers have deplored the great and uncontrolled growth of our periodical literature. "The deadliest disease afflicting the library press," wrote Moon in 1969, "is proliferation."³ Moon, editor of LJ for nine years, cannot be accused of trying to preserve his territory from competition, for he was no longer editor when he wrote. In any case, the solid, national position of LJ is not likely to be much affected by the flood of new journals that has continued unabated. Moon also pointed out the resulting injury to the profession: the great plethora of journals "spreads too thinly the limited amount of good material" and "makes it possible for almost anything on the topic of librarianship, no matter how appalling, to find its way into print somewhere."⁴

Shores has voiced the opposite view of the number and proliferation of library publications.⁵ He feels that proliferation provides outlets for both the status quo and the activist protest positions, as well as for a range of views in between. He also believes that the more outlets there are for would-be librarian writers, the better; and he seems to fear the exercise of a potential censorship if the number of our journals were reduced. Shores's position, however, seems not to be shared elsewhere.⁶ Whatever one's view of the matter, it is certain that the remarkably large number of our periodical publications has been an indirect cause of some of the attacks upon them.

LITERATURE SURVEY AND GENERAL EVALUATION

Almost from its beginnings and to the present, the library press as a genre, has been subject to severe criticism on the grounds that, in Carnovsky's words, "much of it [is] dull, repetitious, and worthless." Carnovsky goes on to underscore the indisputable fact that it is not the journal editors who are solely at fault: "as long as each round table, division, state association, regional group, and special library unit demands its own publication, the proliferation of library periodicals is likely to continue."⁷ Many people would call the *Library*

Quarterly (LQ) our most prestigious and scholarly journal. Carnovsky, a long-time editor of LQ (1943-61), confessed to having "been guilty of accepting too many second-rate manuscripts."⁸ Carnovsky reports the editor "of an excellent and highly respected library periodical" asking him if he had a manuscript available or if he could refer manuscripts to him, saying frankly that he needed more material if he were to meet his publishing schedule.⁹

Speaking from the vantage point of an editor of a state journal, Berry writes: "To say that library periodicals lack originality, that there are too many of them, that the material they contain is repetitious, dull and badly written, and that at some levels their contents are not even worthy of the poor paper and bad printing they receive, is only to echo the complaints so often in the professional literature of the past decade that the criticism itself is guilty of the faults it condemns."¹⁰

"The dearth, the paucity of quality is most noticeable if you examine . . . the articles," writes Moon in criticizing virtually every aspect of the journal literature.¹¹ Becker in 1957, Blake in 1961, Katz in 1966, and Thompson in 1961 are among others who have written harsh and unqualified attacks.¹²

Oboler, prefacing "a severely selective choice of . . . library periodicals," strongly suggests the contrary, in claiming their "vigor, variety, and freedom of expression," and in advancing the belief that "these periodicals and most of the rest are neither duplicatory nor dull."¹³ Oboler's view was distinctly in the minority, however, and almost unique in its defense of our journal literature. The profession simply has not produced, and is not likely in the future to produce, a volume of significant, original material to fill even half of our existing journals.

We are not alone here; exactly the same kinds of criticism have been leveled at the journal literature of other disciplines:

There is too much publishing and too little perishing. Most of what is printed in the more than 500 journals related to our field [language and literature] would be better left unpublished. I place the onus primarily on those editors who accept work that is clearly inferior in style and substance. As long as there is an editor who will print mediocre stuff, there will be more than enough contributors to supply the stuff. . . . The typical ms. is on the one hand pretentious and foot-heavy, on the other . . . superficial and banal."¹⁴

Although this unnamed writer lays the principal blame on the editor's doorstep, it is arguable that every editor has or feels a compelling duty to keep alive a journal for which he has been given responsibility. If he does, indeed, have this responsibility, and if sufficient first-class material to fill his issues is not submitted, he is bound to publish second- and third-class material—or let the journal collapse. Perhaps this is the key; perhaps more editors—and especially editorial boards—should be willing to face the demise of their journals, or reduced frequency.

Nonetheless, a corrective word is in order. Most of the attacks cited date from a decade or more ago. It is still all too true that there is an enormous amount of duplication and repetition, especially in news notes of all kinds, including personnel, book reviews, and notices and reports of meetings and events. This seems wickedly wasteful. However, the accusations of dullness and unoriginality no longer quite hold water. Much of *American Libraries* (AL), LJ, *Wilson Library Bulletin* (WLB), and a small handful of the state journals is *not* dull and does contain new approaches and ideas. Much of the material in *College & Research Libraries* (CRL) and LQ is not dull except to those to whom all scholarship is dull; a large proportion of the contents today is highly original and very little (except the book reviews) is duplicatory.

A more recent, excoriating attack on our periodicals has been offered by Wasserman. Wasserman is looking for intellectual and ideological leadership and he does not find it in our journals. The discussion is limited to LJ, WLB, AL, LQ, *Library Trends* (LT), JEL and *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* (formerly *American Documentation*). Speaking of the first three, he writes: "If one seeks to identify a role of intellectual leadership in the general media, he is inevitably disappointed." He further suggests that "their very frequency of issue, their space limits for substantive contribution, their inappropriateness as vehicles for research reporting, and the varied expectations of their large and diversified readership strongly militate against the assumption of such a role."¹⁵

Later he suggests:

Perhaps the limited standard of the intellectual discourse of the field is most dramatically reflected in the level of its book reviews. . . . For with only rare exception, there is virtually no serious review of the literature of librarianship. Reviews, like librarianship itself, tend to the descriptive and normative account

of contents. The rigorous, analytic, scholarly assessment of ideas is most uncommon. . . . In all American library media . . . the most pervasive feature is the lack of scholarly sensitivity, a glossing over of substance, a type of superficial treatment which conveys a sense that rigorous and critical reviewing is not the business of librarianship. . . . The effect is a periodical literature bereft of the serious analytic assessment of new contributions to the idea flow of the discipline.¹⁶

However one defines *leadership*, Wasserman's indictment is a severe one. He may be open to rebuttal here and there, for example in his judgment of LQ, but overall it is hard to disagree.

Carnovsky attempted to lay down standards for library periodicals, but beyond the criteria of accuracy, adherence to the dictates of good English, and the rejection of second-rate manuscripts, he was unable to go very far.¹⁷ The reason, of course, lies in the widely varying purposes and audiences of the journals. The same standards—other than those just mentioned—cannot validly be applied to the publication of a state library association and to *Special Libraries* (SL), or to LT and WLB. These journals have substantially differing objectives and readerships which go far to determine contents, approach and, indeed, the whole “atmosphere” of the journals.

In 1955, Blough wrote brief histories of sixteen library periodicals.¹⁸ No criteria for the selection of the group are stated, nor is any evaluation attempted. As the sixteen are covered in only about fifty-three full pages of text, the average history is very short, and many of Blough's data are now, of course, out of date. Carlson also surveyed a group of publications about twenty years ago, this time those of four regional and thirty-two state association journals.¹⁹ The study is solely an enumerative and descriptive one.

Since its first issue of January-February 1972, *CALL* (*Current Awareness—Library Literature*) has paid conscientious and comprehensive attention to the journal literature of librarianship. The bulk of each issue consists of a listing of the tables of contents of current issues of journals—usually approximately 300 issues of more than 200 titles. There are also in-depth reviews of new titles and, of special interest here, “Abstracts of the Current Literature on Library Literature.” A series of articles in several issues is entitled “Statistical Bibliography and Library Periodical Literature.” Several of these report on studies of the “most used,” “most cited,” “most liked,” or “most read” journals.

No comprehensive study of library literature has precisely emulated the pioneering methodology developed for journal articles in chemistry by P.L.K. and E.M. Gross in 1927.²⁰ Penner employed the consensus technique for library journals, and reports the "votes" of the heads of six Canadian library schools. For several reasons—some of which the author himself refers to, notably the variation in "expert" opinion—this is not a very reliable method of determining "most important" titles. What titles are most important for whom or for what? A group of American deans, similarly addressed, would certainly not have listed *Canadian Library* in sixth place. Bearing this in mind, however, it is of interest to note that CRL, LJ, LT, SL, and AL received the largest number of votes.²¹

Citation studies by Hart (1950, 2,203 articles), Barnard (1957, 863 articles), Lamers (1965, 4,455 articles), and Little (1968, 5,451 citations) are much more ambitious and more significant.²² (The inherent weaknesses of citation analysis methodology have been frequently pointed out and discussed, and need not be considered here.) The studies are in agreement in at least three respects: (1) LJ, CRL, AL/ALAB, LQ and SL are in the top ten of all four lists, and *American Documentation*, (now *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*), LT—just begun at the time of Hart's study—and WLB are in the top ten of three of the four studies; (2) no foreign title is listed in the top ten in any of the studies (Lamers is concerned with American journals only); (3) the top ten journals account for a very high proportion of all citations—between 58 percent and 85 percent. In the three studies including twenty or more titles (Hart, Lamers, and Little), between 70 percent and 91 percent of all citations come from just twenty titles. These figures conform to Bradford's "law of scattering." Hart's study also included a journal citation from ten "representative" books; the results were substantially the same. By a wide margin, LJ (248 citations), CRL (205), LQ (176), AL/ALAB (173), SL (95), and WLB (74) head the list. No other journal was cited more than twenty-two times.²³

It is especially interesting to note that the ten journals found by Sumner²⁴ to be most cited by authors of articles in the international journal *Libri* also include LJ, LQ, CRL, and LT, with the first three of these ranking behind only *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* and *Libri* itself.

LJ, LQ, CRL, AL/ALAB, and LT were found to be the top five, with SL and WLB in the next five in a study by Lehnus of journals most frequently cited by authors of articles published in JEL between

1960 and 1970.²⁵ The top five journals provided 65 percent of all the citations. It is clear that those who write about librarianship refer, in general, to a very small, concentrated group of journals. If referral can in some degree be related to use (and to importance?), there is then fairly hard evidence of which periodicals are the most used and considered most important (or at least most relevant) by our writers.

Herbert Buntrock, interested in the documentation of documentation rather than of traditional librarianship, examined nine abstracting and citing media, not including LL, chiefly for the years 1961 and 1962.²⁶ Among his briefly reported findings is the interesting fact that even from this limited approach, LJ ranked in a tie for second place and AL in fifth place for number of times cited by the different media. The other American journals in the top ten were *American Documentation/Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, *SL* and *Library Resources & Technical Services* (LRTS).

Somewhat comparable results were obtained by Bundy from a questionnaire returned by 129 public and state library administrators. Among other data, Bundy's findings showed fifty citations to "particularly good" LJ articles, fourteen citations for WLB, and five for AL/ALAB. All other periodicals were cited fewer than five times. Columns and features cited as "most liked" were named 115 times for LJ, 101 times for WLB, and 39 times for AL. It is an interesting commentary that no other journal was cited more than eleven times and only three state journals were cited at all, each three times or fewer.²⁷ In view of the fact that these data are now fifteen years old, that they represent the view of a very limited group, and that "liking" is not the same as "citing," they must be viewed with extreme caution. In particular, AL has improved and changed more dramatically than the other two and, in fact, today covers certain kinds of material—personnel news, for example—that formerly appeared in the other two only. Journals that do not appear, such as CRL, LQ and SL, contain very little of interest to the public library practitioner.

On the other hand, the findings of Bryan's even older but much more comprehensive survey of the professional reading of 1,837 public librarians did include these three journals among the "very helpful professionally," but in small percentages.²⁸ Forty-one percent of the respondents viewed WLB as "very helpful professionally"; the figures for the other library journals were: LJ—38 percent, ALAB—21 percent, LQ—8 percent, SL—5 percent, and CRL—4 percent.

Certain journals, such as the respectably solid *Drexel Library Quarterly* (DLQ) founded in 1965, and the *Journal of Library History*,

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Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship (JLH) founded 1966, were begun after or had only just been founded at the time of the studies.

From all of the foregoing, one may say that a list of the journals most cited by the generality of American library authors—the journals probably most generally used—has to include AL, CRL, LJ, LQ, LT, SL, and WLB (which this author has carefully put in alphabetical order). If information science is to be covered, the *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* must be added. The reader intimately acquainted with the literature may find no surprises here. If he does find any, it may be the inclusion of three popular or mass-appeal titles in a list of those most cited by our writers.

Mention may be made here of the section on librarianship in the compilation *Magazines for Libraries* by Katz and Gargal.²⁹ The twenty-two pages devoted to professional serials include virtually all of the best and most useful journals, each of which is provided with a perceptive and trenchant annotation.

The most detailed recent description and evaluation of most of our leading journals is that by Westerling. This 130-page study, fortunately available in reproduced form, carefully analyzes all issues of fifteen major journals for the years 1960 and 1969 according to a well developed list of objective criteria. These include aspects of format, editing, contents, authority, scope and treatment. The attention Westerling devotes to the several components of format is somewhat disproportionate, but there is careful and close examination of the other criteria, and the study is the best general evaluation we have. Westerling's basic conclusions, that the periodicals she examined "are less than completely satisfactory," and that overall quality increased markedly between 1960 and 1969, are ones with which this writer agrees.³⁰

NATIONAL GENERAL-INTEREST JOURNALS

There are three national general-interest journals, the first, as already noted, being LJ. It was begun as a result of the interest of and discussions between Frederick Leyboldt and Melvil Dewey, both of whom felt that it was time for the budding profession to have a journal of its own. Before 1876, *Publishers' Weekly* had published a substantial amount of material on libraries and librarianship, including an occasional "Library Corner" section and, in October 1872 and January 1875, had devoted entire issues to libraries.

The first issue of LJ, dated September 30, 1876, listed Dewey as

managing editor and R.R. Bowker as general editor, and was distributed at the conference that founded the ALA in Philadelphia in October. This first issue and the others in volume one bore the title *American Library Journal*, but the first word was dropped before the title page and index to the volume were issued. More important, the subtitle read "Journal of the American Library Association." Up until the founding of *Bulletin of the American Library Association* in 1907, LJ was the official organ of the ALA and published not only its conference proceedings but also the *ALA Handbook*, now called the *Membership Directory* and separately published.

LJ is the only one of the three major library periodicals to begin as and to remain a truly general-interest as well as national journal. Included in the first issue were articles on public documents, the profession, international library concerns, and on the establishing of libraries, as well as three departments. News of some libraries in England, France, Germany, Italy and Sweden appeared in a section called "General Notes." Interest in affairs abroad has been a continuous one and was not matched until after World War II in either ALAB, AB or WLB.

Furthermore, the proceedings of the conference in London in 1877 that saw the founding of the (British) Library Association were also published in LJ, which remained the official organ of the Library Association until 1882 when the association began publication of *Monthly Notes*.

Although LJ began under excellent auspices and carried a subscription price of five dollars, it had serious financial problems in its early years, resulting from the paucity of advertising revenues. Discontinuation was announced in June 1880, but the announcement immediately produced promises of support, and a year later Leypoldt announced that the journal had become self-supporting.

No attempt can be made here to evaluate or detail the history of LJ up to World War II. It expanded and improved somewhat, but not steadily or dramatically. It is today a multipurpose, independent, inclusive, broadly directed, usually lively, attractively packaged periodical; there is strong evidence to suggest that it is also the most widely read. It has what is probably the most controversial and spirited editorial section of any major journal. There is a large section of book and media reviews. LJ further includes *School Library Journal* (also published separately). Its biweekly (except in July and August) appearance enables it to remain more up to date for its readers than any other journal in the field.

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The second of the three major journals is *American Libraries*, formerly the *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, which was founded in 1907. For about four decades, its pages were devoted almost exclusively to news and reports concerning the work of the association, and for most of this period it was a rather stodgy and uninspired journal. It was clearly hoped that publication of this material would increase membership in the association, since the proceedings and papers of the annual conferences, the reports of committees, and the *Handbook* would not be available elsewhere. This hope was not realized in great degree: membership in 1906 was 1,844 and by 1911 was only 2,046.

Since World War II, AL has become an increasingly general-interest periodical, publishing news and articles quite indistinguishable from those that appear in WLB and LJ in addition to material relating to the organization, conferences and work of the association. It has also become, as have the other two journals, a much more lively, readable, socially conscious, and interesting publication, with a vastly improved and more attractive format.

The third national journal of general interest is the *Wilson Library Bulletin*. It was begun as the *Wilson Bulletin* in 1914, an irregularly issued house organ and promotional medium of the H.W. Wilson Company, and for years was sent gratis to anyone who requested it. In 1930 a subscription price of one dollar was instituted; as late as 1955 the subscription price was only two dollars. It not merely announced, described and advertised the company's indexes and other publications of interest to libraries, but frequently cited particular libraries or library uses.

Although this content is not entirely lacking today, it is greatly subordinated to general articles, news notes of all kinds, conference and other meeting reports, and notes concerning exhibits and other practical matters. It is similar in content to LJ, but addresses itself somewhat more exclusively to the practical side of library work.

Undoubtedly the most striking and significant change in these three journals during the past decade has been the abandonment of the position of neutral, professional reporting and the acceptance of social responsibility, relevancy and, most recently, advocacy journalism. This closely related group of changes reflects, or at least parallels, developments and viewpoints which began to be apparent in virtually every aspect of American society in the 1960s. It was abundantly evident in the profession outside the journals, came to a focus in the establishment at the ALA conference in 1968 in Kansas City of the

Social Responsibilities of Libraries Round Table, and caused the volcanic explosion at the Atlantic City conference the following year when, among other things, the Vietnam war was opposed and the recruitment of librarians from minority groups was advocated.

A few years earlier, in its October 15, 1964, issue, LJ editorially endorsed Lyndon Johnson's candidacy for the presidency, based upon his and Barry Goldwater's voting record on library legislation. (The gold-framed portrait of Senator Goldwater that appeared on the cover of that issue apparently led some readers to think that LJ was supporting him, rather than his opponent.) Many readers believed then that it was quite unjustified for LJ to endorse a candidate for the presidency even when the probable impact upon library service was so clear. It is not likely that many would take this position today.

In writing of advocacy journalism and social responsibility, one cannot fail to note a significant and much earlier example. Just before the ALA conference in Richmond in 1936, Stanley Kunitz, then editor of WLB, wrote an excoriating editorial on the segregated provisions of the conference and the outrageous letter regarding them that ALA had sent to black librarians.³¹ This was quite an isolated incident, however, and it had little if any immediate impact. It was not until 1954 that protests from the profession caused the ALA to move the annual conference from Miami Beach to Minneapolis. Subsequently, the winds of change began to blow stronger and more steadily. Articles and editorials in WLB in September and LJ in December 1960 addressed the question of segregated libraries in the South, and in the following year WLB published a symposium on the general topic of segregation.³² It is not a matter of pride to note that the ALA and its *Bulletin* were still dragging their feet; an editorial in the latter, in effect, evaded the issue and pointed out simply why the association "is not doing and cannot now do some of the things demanded of it."³³ As late as the early 1960s, too, black librarians could not be members of some of the southern state library associations.

Additional improvement and change in the top three journals (and in a number of state journals as well) have been very great indeed during the past decade, as anyone who picks up a journal of 1966 and one of 1976 can immediately recognize. The improvements are in liveliness, coverage, "relevance," format, and the appearance of non-librarian writers from the fields of literature and the social sciences. Despite these changes, sizable minorities among the most activist

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members of the profession have been far from satisfied. This led to a small rash of generally radical, nonconformist publications of which *Synergy* (1967-73), its successor, *Booklegger Magazine* (November-December 1973+), *Sipapu* (January 1970+, not indexed in LL), *U*N*A*B*A*S*H*E*D Librarian* (November 1971+) and the *Liberated Librarian's Newsletter* (1969+, not indexed in LL) are among the best known. *Synergy* (produced by the Bay Area Reference Center, San Francisco Public Library) was and *Sipapu* is among the best examples of the alternative, anti-establishment or counterculture, semirevolutionary library press. They have been greeted with something less than wide acclaim by the establishment, and *Synergy* was killed by the new librarian of the California State Library—which gave support through LSCA funds—on the grounds of “lack of relevance and the brutal competition for available funds.” The first reason seems open to some question in view of the fact that *Synergy* won the H.W. Wilson Company Library Periodical Award in 1970 and 1972, and the journal received an astonishingly large number of favorable press notices and reviews.

STATE PUBLICATIONS

Before the end of the nineteenth century a number of state library associations had been formed, but none immediately began publishing a journal. By the early twentieth century, however, several associations had begun journals, some of which became and remain significant publications, for example, *Bay State Librarian*, founded in 1911. The earliest and most numerous of the publications coming from states were those of the agencies: *Bulletin of the Board of Library Commissioners of New Hampshire* (1895), Indiana's *Library Occurrent* (1906), *Iowa Library Quarterly* (1901), *Minnesota Libraries* (1904), *News Notes of California Libraries* (1906), *Pennsylvania Library Notes* (1908, no longer published), *Texas Libraries* (1909), *Vermont Library Commission Bulletin* (1905), and *Wisconsin Library Bulletin* (1905).

Carnovsky has suggested that the primary obligation of the state journals is to publish (1) the proceedings of the state library association conferences and reports of the state committees, (2) annual statistics of libraries in the state, (3) personnel news, (4) innovations in service and practice, and (5) information on state library planning and on state and local legislative developments.³⁴

Whether through a publication of the library association, the state library, or a state library agency (such as a commission), most states do in fact publish news of libraries, library legislation, and individuals;

proceedings of the state library association conferences; reports of state committees and library planning; and annual statistics of libraries in the state. Beyond this, it is impossible to generalize. The publications vary from newsletters to substantial journals, from sheets of small scope and mediocre format that contain little but local news, to attractive, well-produced magazines with editorials, serious articles of general interest, notes and information on the national scene, and general book reviews. As to "serious articles of general interest," it seems certain that the periodical literature overall would be strengthened if articles like "American Fiction Today" or "The Alexandrian Library" were not published in state journals, but were referred elsewhere by their editors. Similarly, we do not need twenty or thirty reviews of a new novel or even of a new reference work. Reviews of both kinds of publications appear in a number of national periodicals, and it is unnecessary duplication for the state journals to publish them. A majority of these publications probably have limited out-of-state distribution, but a few have national coverage, at least to the extent that they are subscribed to by numerous libraries in other states. In some cases—for example, *Kansas Library Association Quarterly Newsletter*—subscribers are limited to the membership of the state association.

For financial and other reasons, the state publications generally appear to be in a period of decline. A number have ceased publication entirely, e.g., *Arizona Librarian* and *D.C. Libraries*. Others, formerly journals, are now only newsletters, such as *Missouri Library Association Quarterly*, *Florida Libraries*, *New Mexico Library Bulletin*, *Bulletin of the Maine Library Association*, *Montana Library Quarterly*, and *New Jersey Libraries*.

Regardless of this, there is serious question as to the out-of-state impact or use of state publications, although some libraries undoubtedly review reported library statistics for comparative purposes, and may benefit from reports on library planning and legislation elsewhere, but it seems significant that only one state publication appears in the first ten most-cited titles in the studies already noted by Hart, Barnard, Lamers, Little, Sumner, Thompson, and Lehnus. *Illinois Libraries* is number two in Lamers's study, number eleven in Lehnus's, and number sixteen in Little's. This does not mean, of course, that none of the material appearing in the state publications is valuable; some surely is. The data certainly strongly suggest, however, that librarian writers do not often consult such publications or, if they do, do not find material in them relevant to their needs.

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The indexing or nonindexing of state as well as of other journals may tell us little or nothing about the intrinsic value and quality of a publication, but it does indicate something about the general accessibility of its contents. From this point of view, it is interesting to note that the most recent issue of LL available at this writing (October 1975) indexes publications from only thirty-four states.

To single out individual publications from among the nearly one hundred state journals is probably an act of temerity. Nonetheless, a subjective impression gained from extensive sampling suggests that *Bay State Librarian*, *California Librarian*, *California School Libraries* (the publication of the California Association of School Librarians), *Illinois Libraries*, *Michigan Librarian*, *Minnesota Libraries*, *Ohio Library Association Bulletin*, *Oklahoma Librarian*, *Texas Library Journal* and *Wisconsin Library Bulletin* are today among those that consistently maintain relatively high standards. Since its establishment in 1960, the H.W. Wilson Company Library Periodical Award has been given three times to *California Librarian*, twice to *Ohio Library Association Bulletin*, and once each to *Illinois Libraries*, *Bay State Librarian*, and *Texas Library Journal*.

NATIONAL SPECIAL-INTEREST JOURNALS

A third, very large group is a category that might be called national special-interest journals—that is, publications of potential interest to any librarian in the country concerned with the particular subject matter. Here we have an *embarras de richesses*. In fact, the bounds of the group are difficult to define; the category, if carried to the ultimate limit of the definition, could logically include almost everything that is not a journal of national general interest or a state publication. Consequently, only a few of the most prominent and best known can be considered here.

These journals may be divided into several subgroups: (1) types of libraries, (2) types of library activity, service or function, and (3) journals of particular subject matter of limited interest. In the first subgroup fall the oldest of all these journals, *Law Library Journal* (LLJ, 1908), *Special Libraries* (SL, 1910), and *Medical Library Association Bulletin* (MLAB, 1911). Also belonging here are *School Libraries* (Sc L, 1952), now *School Media Quarterly*, the publication of the American Association of School Librarians, an ALA division; *College & Research Libraries* (CRL, 1939), of ALA's division, the Association of College and Research Libraries; *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (JAL, 1975); *Journal of Library Automation*, the official publication of ALA's Infor-

mation Science and Automation Division; and *School Library Journal* (SLJ, 1954), formerly *Junior Libraries*, published both separately and as a part of LJ. To the second group belong such publications as *RQ*, (1960), the publication of ALA's Reference and Adult Services Division; *Library Technology Reports* (LTR, 1965); *Library Resources & Technical Services* (LRTS, 1957), successor to *Journal of Cataloging and Classification* and *Serial Slants*, the publication of the ALA Resources and Technical Services Division; and *Top of the News*, from ALA's Children and Adult Services divisions. The third subgroup includes, among others, the *Journal of Library History, Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship* (JLH, 1966); and the *Journal of Education for Librarianship* (JEL, 1960), the official publication of the Association of American Library Schools. These listings are a bare minimum and could readily be doubled or even tripled.

For want of a better place, three important journals, *Drexel Library Quarterly* (DLQ, 1965), *Library Trends* (LT, 1952), and *Library Quarterly* (LQ, 1931) may also be included here.

All of these journals would rate at least a "B" on the academic grading scale and several of them merit "A." All more or less regularly publish first-rate articles, and all, more or less regularly, publish distinctly second-rate material. (JAL, only two issues old at this writing, is omitted from this evaluation.) Most are today attractive in appearance and "unstodgy," JEL, LQ, LT, and JLH less so than the others. Most seem to be better edited now than they were ten years ago.

LT and DLQ are distinctive among our journals in that each issue of both, under a guest editor, is entirely devoted to a single, rather narrow topic such as "Education for Librarianship Abroad in Selected Countries," "Problems of Acquisition for Research Libraries," "Library Services to the Aging," or maps. There are no news items, no book reviews, no editorials, no reports. Each issue, with a dozen or more contributors writing articles on various aspects of the topic, is comparable to a book, and some issues have become documents of considerable resource importance.

If any of our journals deserves the adjective "scholarly," it is probably LQ. It was established as "a journal of investigation and discussion in the field of library science" by the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago in 1931 with an international list of distinguished advisory editors. Certainly no American library journal before it had the avowed aim of publishing the results of research and investigation, and none to this day adheres so closely

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and single-mindedly to this purpose. After the advance publicity, which promised articles of a kind in which other periodicals were not interested or for which they lacked space, the first issue brought a good deal of disappointment. The specifics were pointed out in an editorial in LJ in which it is suggested that, with two exceptions, the articles were ones that would have been welcomed in existing periodicals.³⁵ Objection was also made to the publication of an important report in condensed form rather than in its entirety. The first of these criticisms was certainly valid, and is worth mentioning because it could be leveled at many subsequent issues of LQ—and at issues of most other journals. But this is not really the important point. The important points are that LQ provided for the first time a medium devoted exclusively to scholarly publication, it did and does provide an avenue for the publication of some writing either of a kind or of a length to which almost all other journals are not hospitable, and through the years it has maintained a high scholarly standard. Except in format, which for financial reasons was considerably altered for the worse after 1970, LQ today is virtually unchanged from its beginnings four and one-half decades ago.

Most of the other major representatives of this large group—JAL, LTR, and JLH being among the notable exceptions—are publications of library associations or ALA divisions which, from most practical points of view, amounts to about the same thing. They therefore necessarily have several basic purposes in common: (1) to provide news and reports on the association's/division's meetings, committee activities, plans, proposals, projects, and the like; (2) to publish reviews of new titles of interest to the membership; and (3) to publish substantive materials in the form of articles, on topics of concern to the membership. With respect to the first two of these purposes, the journals perform comprehensively and in detail. With respect to the third, every critic is a layman in all but a very few of the fields involved, and in no position to make qualitative judgments.

As the oldest and probably the best of the ALA divisional publications, CRL has achieved a solid position, not only nationally but also internationally, as the previously noted citation studies tend to demonstrate. From its first issue in December 1939, it did not limit itself to news and reports of divisional work and meetings, or to "how-to-do-it" articles, although all of these have been and still are present. Even the earliest issues contain scholarly writings and, increasingly, the results of real inquiry and research. An interesting and worthwhile innovation begun in 1966 has been the publication, as a supplement

to CRL, of *College and Research Libraries News*. As its name suggests, the publication includes all of the more ephemeral, less important matters, so that CRL itself contains only articles and other substantive material, as well as book reviews, abstracts and notices.

In contrast, RQ, the newest of the divisional publications, began in 1960 as an exceedingly modest, seven-page mimeographed newsletter that contained neither articles nor book reviews; today it has both. Much of the content, both in subject matter and treatment, is fresh, lively, and of potential interest to librarians outside the division.

Top of the News, Sc L, and LRTS are much more strictly limited to the interests of their primary audiences—a statement that is in no sense intended as criticism.

Although there obviously are differences in the kinds of articles published (not only from one journal to another, but also from changes in the editorships of the same journal), another of West-erling's general findings, is worth noting here. In all 1969 issues of the fifteen journals she studied, she counted 61 "philosophically oriented articles" and 398 articles with a "practical or situational orientation."³⁶ No one will argue that the profession does not need information and guidance of a practical or procedural nature, but the proportion here seems excessive. The frontiers of the profession will not be advanced, its fundamental problems will not be solved, and the many "whys" which it faces will not be answered by "how-we-do-it-good-in-our-library" articles, no matter how numerous, useful, informative and well done.

JOURNALS OF OTHER THAN STATE LIBRARIES

The last group to be considered, a small but selective one, consists of approximately fifty journals published by individual libraries other than those of states. A number of commendable former members of the group are no longer published, e.g., the *Boston Public Library Quarterly* and the *Grosvenor (Buffalo) Library Bulletin*. The group includes publications from smaller institutions, such as the *Colby Library Quarterly* and *Dartmouth College Library Bulletin*, as well as journals of large universities like the *Cornell University Libraries Bulletin*, Princeton University's *Library Chronicle*, and the Yale University *Library Gazette*. Also included are the *New York Public Library Bulletin* and the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*. According to LL and LISA, this group has never been seriously studied. Further, and regrettably, none of these journals is covered by *Library and Information Science Abstracts* (LISA) and fewer than a dozen by LL.

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A number of generalizations may safely be made about the journals comprising this group: (1) with few exceptions, they are produced by privately supported institutions; (2) their contents are primarily bibliographic, bibliophilic, and in the areas of literary criticism and literary history, rather than of librarianship; (3) format and editing are substantially better than the average of other library periodicals—all are good in these respects, some are excellent, and a few, such as Columbia University's *Columbia Library Columns*, the University of Pennsylvania's *Library Chronicle*, the University of Southern California's *Coranto*, and the University of Texas's *Library Chronicle*, are distinguished; (4) articles are generally scholarly in nature, often the result of intensive research, and frequently written by national or international authorities; and (5) many of these articles are based upon important additions to or holdings of the libraries.

A final comment seems appropriate. Considering the fact that almost all librarians are constant users of indexes, and are generally critical of documents that do not contain them, it is noteworthy that a number of our important journals do not provide annual indexes. To be sure, authors and subject matter of articles are generally revealed in LL and/or LISA, but this is no substitute for a detailed index. Among the journals that do not have full indexes are JEL, LJ, SLJ, RQ, and WLB.

BOOK PUBLISHING

Until well after the end of World War II, the overwhelming majority of publishing in the library field was carried on by the American Library Association (beginning in 1886), the R.R. Bowker Company (1872), and the H.W. Wilson Company (1898), with the Special Libraries Association (1909)—quantitatively speaking—a poor fourth. Up until this time the output of all four publishers consisted almost exclusively of bibliographies, guides, indexes, manuals, texts, and other “tool” publications. Such publications still predominate. The appearance of a scholarly work, such as Louis Shores's *Origins of the American College Library, 1638-1800* (New York, Barnes and Noble, 1935) or William M. Randall's *The College Library* (Chicago, ALA and University of Chicago Press, 1932), was an exceptional event.

Lest the intent of these comments be misinterpreted, it should be said that librarians everywhere could not operate—or could do so only with greatly decreased efficiency—without publications of these

three publishers such as *Library Literature* and the numerous other Wilson periodical indexes; ALA's *Guide to Reference Books*, *American Library Laws* and the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules*; and Bowker's *Publishers' Trade List Annual* and *Books in Print*.

The situation has changed markedly during the past twenty to thirty years. In the first place, the number of publishers, like the number of journals, has greatly increased. In the second place, scholarly works appear regularly and with increasing frequency.

Although ALA, Bowker, and Wilson still account for the great bulk of library book publication, some newer entrants have substantial publication lists. For example, Scarecrow Press (1950) and Shoe String Press (1952) each have approximately 250 titles in librarianship and bibliography/reference. Both presses were begun by librarians, and were created to provide inexpensively produced, low-cost library publications of a kind or for a clientele somewhat neglected by the existing publishers. Presumably as a result of production economies, the publications of Scarecrow Press, and to a somewhat lesser extent of Shoe String Press, have been characterized by poor format and, what is much worse, by excessive and often inexcusable errors of all kinds. In this latter respect, there has recently been some improvement.

More surprising than the appearance of these two publishers is the activity of a few big-name publishers such as Pergamon Press, Gale Research Company, McGraw-Hill (with its "Series in Library Education"), and Wiley (with its "Wiley Information Science Series"). Furthermore, the original publishing of the reprint firm, Greenwood Press, the output of Libraries Unlimited, and the publications of Linnett Books are all largely if not exclusively devoted to library publications. Microcard Editions, founded in 1961, publishes a useful "Reader Series in Library and Information Science." All of these have begun during the past two decades. To these names must be added those of a number of university presses, chiefly in institutions with library schools offering doctoral programs: California, Chicago, Columbia, Illinois, Michigan, and Rutgers, among others, all of which publish scholarly works with some frequency, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—a university without a library school. Before World War II, the University of Chicago was the only one that had any library publishing program at all.

With the exception of those of the University of California and M.I.T., the university presses have yielded, at least to some degree, to the financial expediency of publishing textbooks and other "tool"

works. The usefulness and practical value of such publications is not questioned here. However, almost all university presses are subsidized to some extent, and it would be of greater long-range benefit to the profession if the presses would concentrate their energies in areas for which universities and their presses are uniquely and most fundamentally established: inquiry and research.

Whereas the great majority of the nontool publications of the other university presses are historical, bibliographical, or administrative, those of M.I.T. have consisted of studies that attack the intellectual bases of library and library-related problems. It is no favorable reflection upon the doctoral programs in librarianship that this statement applies to the publications of a university that does not have such a program.

While both Bowker and Wilson have broadened their lists to include publications of a more or less scholarly, nontool nature, in recent years the ALA has changed most in this regard. Sometime during the 1960s the publications list was broadened to include an occasional scholarly study, not necessarily on matters related to librarianship. This development, at least insofar as library material is concerned, has been slowed by ALA's financial difficulties in the past few years. It may be noted, too, that some friends and critics of the ALA find it astonishing and unfortunate that the association will publish books of a general nature, such as those about William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, and Henry James, when it will not devote funds to the publication of a badly needed professional title, a new edition of its 1943 *ALA Glossary of Library Terms*.

The Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of ALA, will shortly celebrate the silver jubilee of its "Publications in Librarianship" series, formerly "ACRL Monographs." Nearly forty titles have been published, varying in quality from the indifferent to the excellent, but even the least good have brought to the attention of the profession useful information that otherwise would probably not have been made generally available.

The overall intellectual quality of the publications of the American Society for Information Science seems better than that of the other associations, and its *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, in particular, is a work that in all respects compares favorably with similar publications in other fields. As Wasserman notes, however: "Its intellectual forum centers on means, not ends. Its keenest contributors and the lines of their analysis are sharply focused upon the technical issues as if the more fundamental ethical concerns had

been consensually derived, when they have not been."³⁷

We do not usually think of the Library of Congress (LC) as a publisher in the sense of being a library press, because most of its nearly 400 in-print titles are bibliographies, catalogs and checklists, and perhaps because LC does not always publish what it produces. Nonetheless LC has been producing/publishing for 150 years, and some of its titles are just as much library tools as are similar publications of ALA, Bowker and Wilson. LC's author and subject catalogs in book form must be counted among the most important bibliographical undertakings and contributions.

Some conclusions and evaluations have been offered in this paper, chiefly on the present status of the library press and its development during the past thirty years. A longer perspective also seems worthwhile. Few are alive today who were knowledgeable professionals in 1923, a date about halfway between the founding of LJ and the present. Writing of our professional literature in that year, Wilson had this to say:

Mudge's Guide to Reference Books, the *Dewey Classification*, parts of the *Library of Congress Classification*, the *Library Journal*, *Public Libraries*, the *Wilson Bulletin*, the *A.L.A. Bulletin*, a number of the H.W. Wilson Company indexes and catalogs, *Publishers Weekly*, and *The New York Times Book Review*—these titles, with national bibliographies and the publications of the Library Bureau, the R.R. Bowker Company, and the office of the U.S. Office of Education, constituted the core of professional literature with which the library school student had to deal.³⁸

Whether there may have been a few additional titles properly belonging to "the core of professional literature" in 1923 is not important. Even if there were, our situation today is almost incredibly better and the difference in only a little more than one-half century is one not only of amount, variety, and scope, but also of quality. There is, it is true, still far too much duplication in our periodical literature, and the number of titles is probably greater than we need. Granting further that a good deal of trivia is still being published, and that in neither the journals nor the monographs is enough attention paid to the philosophical and intellectual bases of the profession or the research necessary to solve our fundamental problems, it may still categorically be said that the library press has made a great deal of progress.

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