

concludes that the supply and demand situation as it existed required only a very small percentage of humanistic writings in manuscript to be made available through publishing.

The statistical part of the book is based mainly on the British Museum *Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century*. While, admittedly, this covers a large cross-section of incunables, greater accuracy could have been achieved if some of the many national catalogs published since were used as well.

The bibliography is extensive, yet one misses standard works which may have been of help, such as the diaries of Marino Sanuto, who as senator of the Venetian Republic faithfully recorded anything he found of interest from 1496 to 1533. Somewhat later, but a good source for the study of the book trade and the mobility of books, is Schwetschke's *Codex nundinarius* which categorizes the books for sale at the Frankfurt fairs by language, content, and place of publication. Other helpful works for this purpose are the published insurance and shipping inventory lists.

The book is full of interesting facts and insights which will delight the reader such as those pertaining to joint publishing and the distinction between the printer and the entrepreneur publisher. The reader will find the book challenging as to the method and procedure used as well as to its conclusions.—Miroslav Krek, *Brandeis University Library*.

Davinson, Donald. *Theses and Dissertations as Information Sources*. London: Clive Bingley; Hamden, Conn.: Linnet Books, 1977. 88p. \$7.00. LC 76-54930. ISBN 0-208-01539-6 Linnet; 0-85157-227-8 Bingley.

Donald Davinson's opening statement—"Academic theses provide a fascinating field of study for the librarian"—in the introduction whets the appetite of the reader, while the remainder of the work leaves the reader intellectually malnourished. The thin volume of eighty-eight pages itself seems undernourished. Chapter 1 begins on page 11; a postscript of three pages includes a page of five lines in presenting an unannotated list of thesis guides; and the work

ends with five pages of indexes (author and title and subject) with more than one of the five pages left blank.

Substantively, the reader will find little that is new or that has not been better presented elsewhere. For example, "The Bibliographic Control of Theses" (Chapter 3) is a superficial sampling of bibliographic sources without critical comment, while Reynolds' *Guide to Theses and Dissertations* (Gale, 1975) seeks to present an exhaustive, international annotated bibliography of such sources.

Davinson's intent to convey to the reader an international understanding of dissertations as information sources is seldom attained; the reader often is left with a hodgepodge of disjointed information. After a careful reexamination of Chapter 2, "The Nature and Purposes of Theses," the reader will be hard pressed to recall much information which in any vital way might affect the ability of the dissertation to serve as an information vehicle.

Few academic librarians need be reminded that this nation's current annual output of dissertations surpasses 30,000 titles, a number which dwarfs this nation's annual output of commercially published, scholarly monographic titles. Given these and other nations' outpourings of scholarly information contained in dissertations, the importance of the dissertation as an information source is self-evident. There is no dearth of questions concerning the dissertation that need answers—for example, do the perceptions of librarians concerning dissertations differ from those of dissertation authors? Would inclusion of dissertations in book review columns affect library acquisition programs? Does the acquisition of dissertations by libraries in microformat adversely affect subsequent use?

Recent inquiries into the role and use of dissertations by the Universities of Michigan and Texas attest to the continuing concern of others outside libraries for greater insights into the dissertation as an information vehicle. Unfortunately for interested readers, Davinson's book adds little or no insight. The dissertation as a topic deserves better treatment than accorded by this title.—Calvin J. Boyer, *The University of Mississippi*.



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