

Book Reviews/Boekresensies

Die Boyazoglu-versameling van Franse Africana: 'n geannoteerde bibliografie en beskrywende inventaris van memorabilia

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Johannesburg: Rand Afrikaans University

1996

ISBN 0-86970-392-7

Soft cover, 111p.

R55.00

It is a well-known and indisputable fact that the possession of special collections is a major factor in determining the strength of a university library's scholarly resources. Certain overseas countries, especially in the U.S.A. and Europe, have a long tradition of excellent special collections enhancing the parent library's book stock holdings. Even South Africa, with its more recent history of library development, contains numerous instances of special collections of considerable quality. This is especially true of the older South African university libraries, which have been enriched with special collections. Perhaps the classic example of a South African institution with special collections of international repute is the national library in Cape Town, namely the South African Library.

The library possessing special collections generally makes its resources more widely known and accessible through the compilation and publication of catalogues and bibliographies. For example, the University of the Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg, has published a series of catalogues of its early printed book collections.

These efforts often involve considerable sacrifice in terms of time and expense, especially in recent years, when library budgets have been drastically pruned. The Rand Afrikaans University library is therefore to be commended as the latest example of a South African institution which has published a bibliography on a special collection of considerable importance.

The Boyazoglu collection of French Africana is the focus of this new bibliography, published in Afrikaans in the first instance, with an identical English version currently being prepared for publication by a commercial publisher.

The bibliography is divided into two parts, a fully annotated descriptive catalogue of almost 200 monographs and a lesser number of selected journal articles, followed by an inventory of some 156 memorabilia, consisting of cartoons, ceramics, engravings, ephemera, glassware, lead models, maps, metal and wooden objects, paper models, photographs, posters, sheet music, toys and works of art. Each of the memorabilia sections is equipped with a brief introductory essay explaining the importance of the material. A ten-page subject index complements the bibliography.

The Boyazoglu bibliography is certainly a most welcome addition in the field of French Africana. Almost two decades have passed since the State Library, Pretoria published *French publications on South Africa*; a bibliography of books and pamphlets to the year 1935. South Africa's international relations have been greatly transformed since the country became a fully-fledged democracy in 1994, and in a sense the Boyazoglu bibliography is a valuable reminder of the historic links between the two countries.

The Bibliography should be made widely known as a model of special collection development in South Africa, especially as the donor himself points out in the introduction:

'I hope to further enrich this collection in the future, and trust that others who possess French or other South European Africana would also consider lending or giving items to the RAU in the hope of developing the idea of a South African Mediterranean Research Centre'.

It is a pleasure to note that the English version of the annotated bibliography and descriptive inventory, with colour photographs of all the memorabilia in the collection, has been completed and will appear in the near future, under the imprint of a commercial publisher. Hopefully, it can be launched, with perhaps an exhibition of the collection, in time for the donor's sixtieth birthday on 29th November 1997. In the meantime, South African libraries should hasten to acquire the Afrikaans edition, which has been attractively printed with black and white illustrations, in a limited edition of 200 copies.

The Boyazoglu collection of French Africana is the 'flagship' of the Rand Afrikaans University library's special collections. It should not be forgotten that the library, which has only been in existence since 1966, has built up some fine special collections, including the Africana collection, the N.P. Van Wyk Louw collection, the Eugene Nielen Marais collection, the H.G. Viljoen documents, the Bakker collection, the Badenhorst Durrant collection, the Warffemius collection and the Bisschop collection. (A brochure describing these collections is available from the RAU University library).

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