

Chronicling the Developments of The Double Reed

Jenna Sehmann

Eastern Kentucky University, jenna_sehmann@mymail.eku.edu

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Chronicling the Developments of *The Double Reed*

HON 420 Honors Thesis – UGRA Submission

Jenna Sehmman

Introduction

This study looks at scholarly articles in thirty-eight years of periodical journals, *The Double Reed*, published by the International Double Reed Society (henceforth IDRS). Quantitative studies have documented research articles in twelve categories: career-related, composition, extended techniques/modern practices, health, historical, instrument, interview, pedagogy, performance practice, performer profile, reeds, and other. Through building a categorized database of articles from each publication, topics can be easily tracked and analyzed. In tracking the publications over time, trends and flaws have arisen that need to be noted in the double reed community.

The "About" section on the IDRS website provides this information:

"The International Double Reed Society (IDRS) was established in December of 1971 and is a world-wide organization of double reed (oboe and bassoon family) players, instrument manufacturers and enthusiasts. The society has over 4,400 members from 56 countries. Within the United States, 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are represented." ("About")

Since the organization's start, it has published four periodical journals including *The Double Reed*. *The Double Reed* is the only current journal of the society. The IDRS hosts a yearly conference that includes a young artist competition and yearly meeting of officers. Additionally, the IDRS website houses additional online resources including

livestreams of conference performances, a podcast, and a Facebook group. The constitution of the International Double Reed Society dated June 1997, states the purpose of the Society and Journal is as follows:

“To give double reed musicians, and all those interested in the problems peculiar to performers, teachers, students, and manufacturers of double reed instruments, a means and body through which communication can be fostered on a world-wide basis. To serve as a clearing house for ideas of general interest by maintaining a repository for the receipt and dissemination to the Society’s members of information, ideas, and research into all fields pertaining to double reeds” (“Constitution”).

In this research, it is evident that while the majority of the content within *The Double Reed* lives up to the standards in the IDRS constitution, the publication is not entirely fulfilling its purpose as a journal to the members of the society.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the successes and shortcomings of *The Double Reed* by conducting a content analysis. “Conducting content analyses can provide a clear perspective of what has occurred over time, if it is an historical analysis, or of current research efforts that can give context to and suggest directions for further investigations” (Kantorski 64). This content analysis provides useful insight into the developments of *The Double Reed*, but also into advancements in the double reed community. One of the first researchers on music periodicals, Cornelia Yarbrough,

opens her 1984 analysis with this quote: "From time to time, it would seem appropriate to reflect on our past accomplishments in order to gain perspective and to establish goals for the future" (213). This study allows for perspective on scholarly articles written for the double reed community, and the steps that will need to be taken to continue to diversify the contributions to *The Double Reed*.

The following research questions were composed to be answered by the data of the collection of articles:

1. Has the number of articles in *The Double Reed* changed over time?
2. Is *The Double Reed* representing a diverse, international population within its submissions of publications?
3. Are submissions in *The Double Reed* evenly split between bassoon and oboe focused articles?
4. Are articles from all categories fairly represented?
5. What percentage of articles is original to *The Double Reed* and what percentage are reprinted from another source?

In a similar study, a researcher provided a disclaimer stating "It is a difficult assignment to place articles in categories because some do not sit easily within any one category while others could be placed more than one category" (McCarthy 181).

In the nature of this research, it is important to remember that some articles categorized could have fit into more than one category, and the best category was

chosen. In some cases, the secondary category was noted in the “additional information” section, but research was not conducted upon secondary categories.

Inspired by another study (Goldenberg 25), the author would also like to state that there was no informal access to any materials pertaining to the International Double Reed Society or *The Double Reed*. The only information accessed were the journals themselves and public information on the IDRS website.

Procedure

For this study, all articles (N= 930) from thirty-eight volumes of journals spanning 1978-2015 were surveyed and entered into a Microsoft Excel Database. The volume, edition year, and page number from each article were recorded. Reprints and sources of reprints were also noted. Each article was categorized by instrument and region, and then categorized by subject and subcategory if needed.

Volume/Journal No.	Year	Page start	Page end	Title	Author	Reprint	Region	Instrument	Category	Sub-Category
1.1	1978	6	13	Observations for Today's Oboist	Zonn, W		unknown	oboe	Extended Technique/Modern practices	
1.1	1978	24	25	Guidance to Young Auditioners - Canada	Weait, C		Canada	general	performance practice	
1.1	1978	31	31	An Early Approach for Detecting a Good or Bad Piece of Cane	Michael J. Trentacosti		USA	Bassoon	Reeds	
1.2	1978	5	7	A French Bassoonist in the United States: Auguste Mesnard	Laurence Ibisch		France, USA	Bassoon	Historical	Performer
1.2	1978	9	9	A New Easel for Profiling	Cecil E. James		Europe (UK)	Bassoon	Reeds	

Figure 1

Figure 1 represents the setup of the database used to categorize all of the articles.

For the purposes of this study, only scholarly and informative articles were reviewed.

Articles that were not reviewed were as follows:

- Obituaries, reminiscences, or pictorial memories
- Reflections or reports on events
- Reviews of music, recordings, or products
- Letters to the editor/president
- Short stories, poems, or comics
- Ongoing columns

Instrument

Instrument categories were defined as follows:

- Bassoon
- Chamber Music
- Contrabassoon
- English Horn
- General
- Oboe
- Oboe d'Amore
- Other (Bass Oboe, Chirimias, Contraforte, Heckelphone, Sarrusophone, Shakuhachi, Zurna)

Articles were categorized as "General" if they could apply to any double reed player.

Region

Region categories were defined as follows:

- Asia
- Canada
- Europe
- Other
- USA

Region of the article was determined by the origin of author, not the subject of the article. The country of origin was written in parentheses next to the region.

Category

Categories were defined as follows:

- Career-Related: articles relating to acquiring a job or making a career as a musician.
- Composition: any article about a piece of music, style of musical composition, or pieces of music related to a certain instrument or instrument group.
- Extended Techniques/Modern Practices: articles related to 20th or 21st century practices required of musicians, or, articles related to modern technology or development.
- Health: Articles related to musician-specific health.
- Historical: articles that contain a historical element

- Instrument: articles relating to instruments, instrument fingering, mechanics, care, and purchase.
- Interview: articles that contain interviews.
- Other: Articles that could not be categorized into another preexisting category, yet still met all of the criteria of an article for this study. Potential categories of these articles were placed in the "subcategory" section of the database.
- Pedagogy: any articles related to pedagogy, or teaching younger students.
- Performance practice: any articles relating to performance, practice techniques, or the improvement of playing an instrument.
- Performer Profile: an article containing a profile of a current performer, composer, or professional in the double reed field. If the profile featured someone other than a performer (composer or professional), that was noted in the subcategory field.
- Reeds: any articles pertaining to reeds, reed tools, or cane.

Subcategory

Subcategories were only determined for three categories: Historical, Instrument, and Interview. If an article was categorized into a category but not a subcategory, the subcategory section was left blank.

Historical

- Composer

- Composition
- General (IDRS)
- Instrument
- Performer

Instrument

- Care
- Mechanics
- Purchase

Interview

- Composer
- Conductor
- Performer
- Professional

Results

Preliminary results in this study were determined using the PivotTable and charts functions in Microsoft Excel.

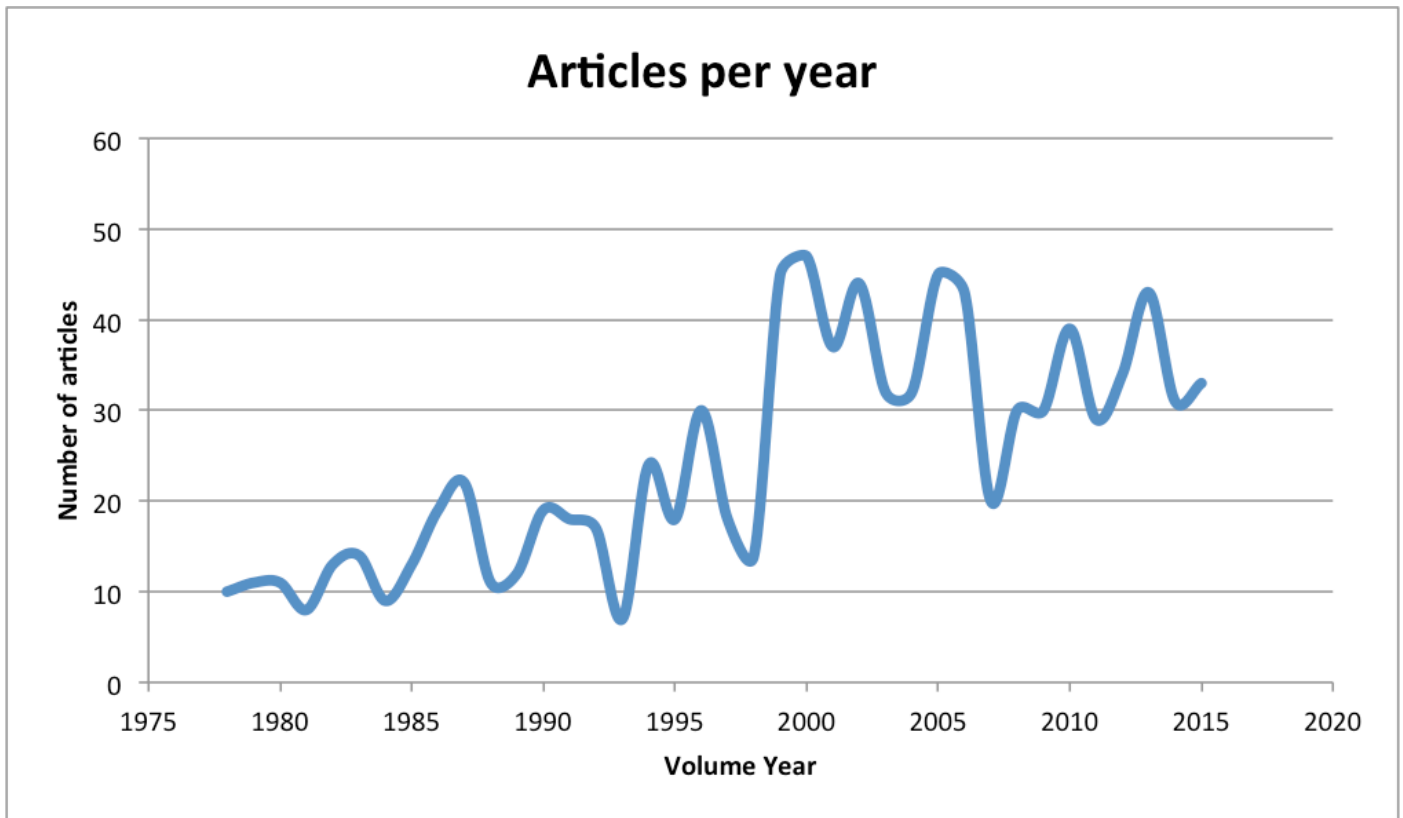


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the number of articles that were published per year in the journal. In 2005, the journal published their highest number of articles per year, with 47 articles total over four volumes. 1993 marked the lowest number of articles per year, with only 7 articles published over three volumes. Until 1999, the journal only had three volumes per year, which could account for the lower number of articles in year's prior. Another factor that may account for the lower article numbers 1978-1998 is that there was an annual journal titled *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society* that was published 1978-1999, in addition to *The Double Reed*. *The Journal of the International Double Reed Society*, along with the other publications of the IDRS, *To The World's*

Bassoonists (1969-1977) and *To The World's Oboists (1972-1977)*, were not researched for this study.

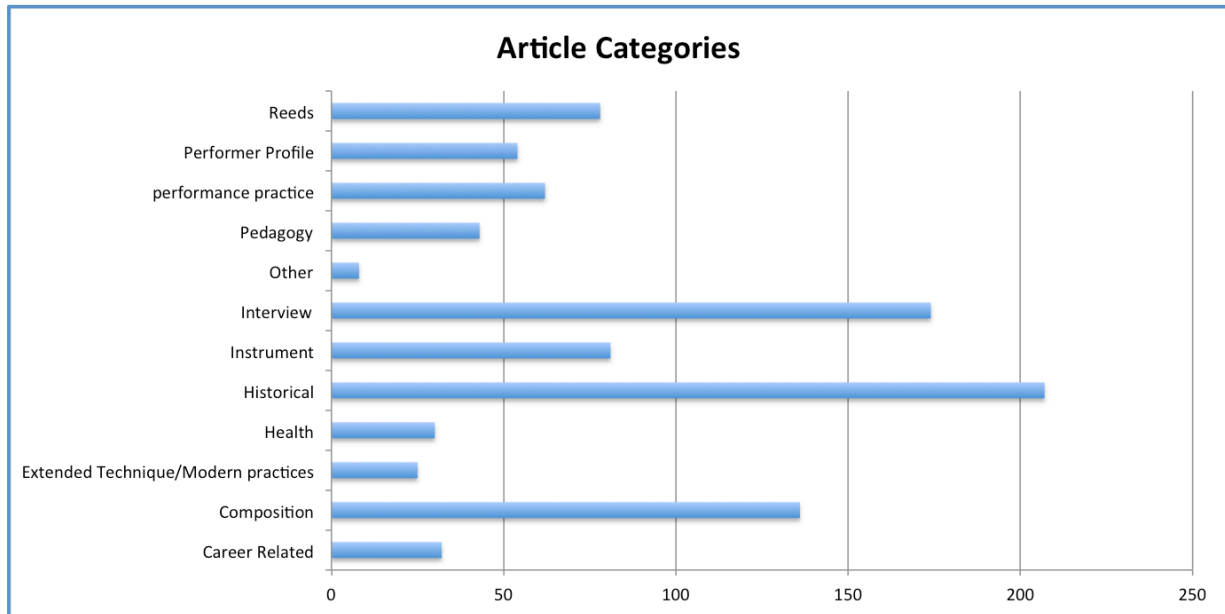


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the number of articles per category. Historical articles had the most articles, with 207 total. Interviews (174 articles) and composition-related articles (136 articles) had the most after historical.

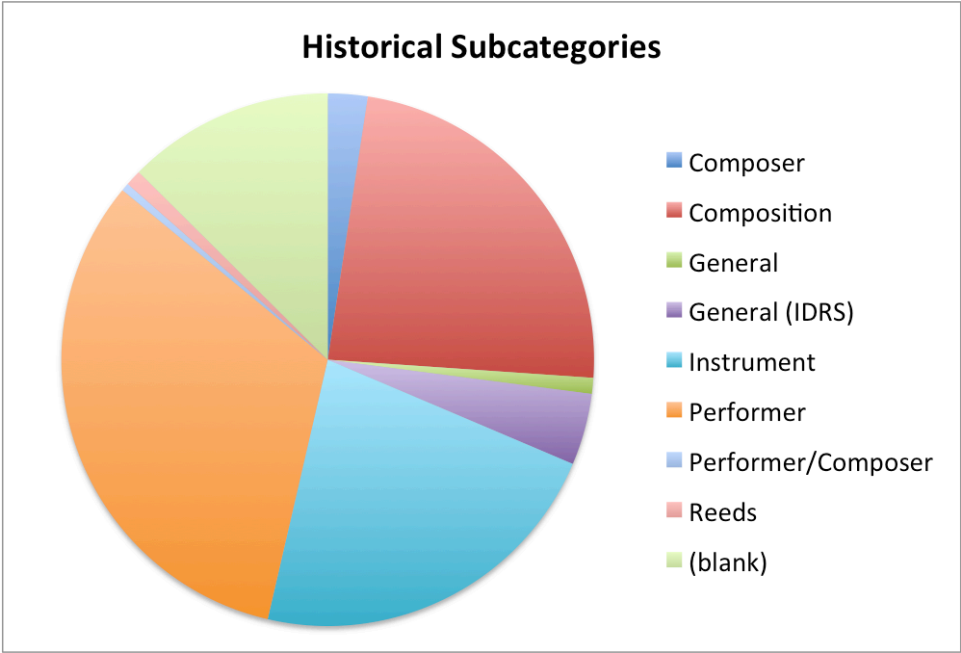


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows each subcategory for the 207 historical articles.

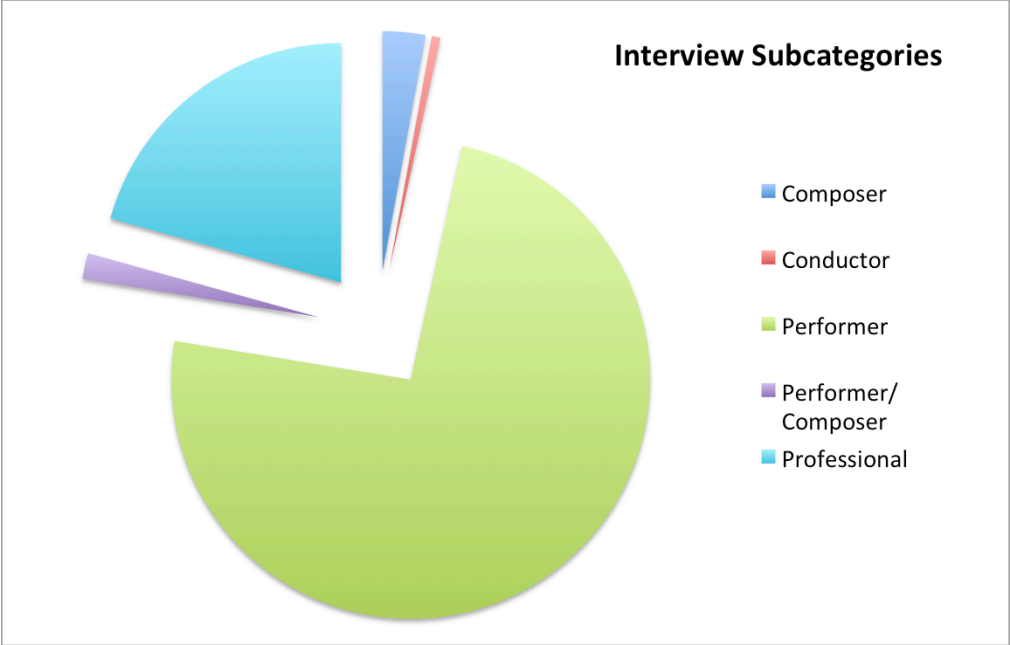


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows each subcategory for the 174 interview articles.

Author Regions

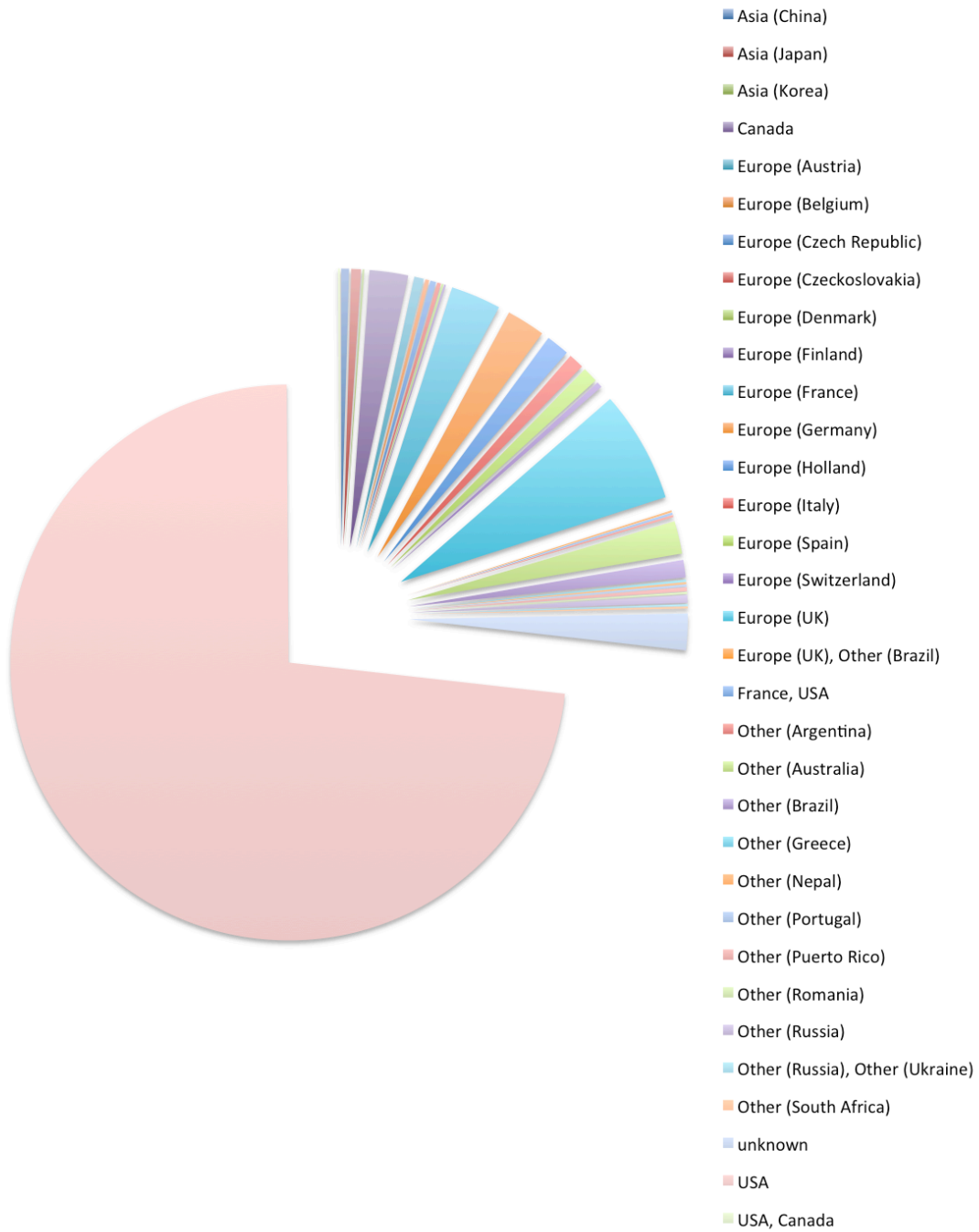


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows the regions of each author of the articles in the study. It is clear that Americans write a majority of the articles in *The Double Reed*. Out of the 930 articles categorized for this study, 652 of those articles were written by Americans. There were also 149 articles from Europe (divided by country in figure 6), 20 articles from Canada, and 10 articles from Asia.

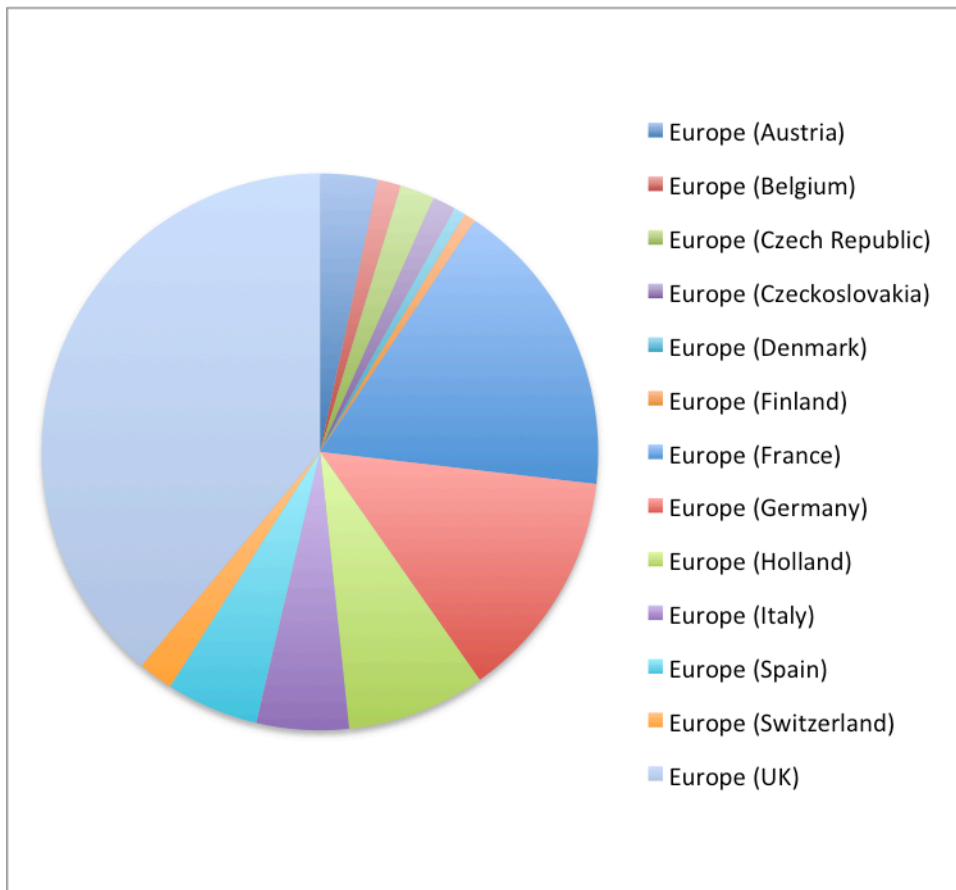


Figure 7

Figure 7 details countries from the 149 articles by European authors.

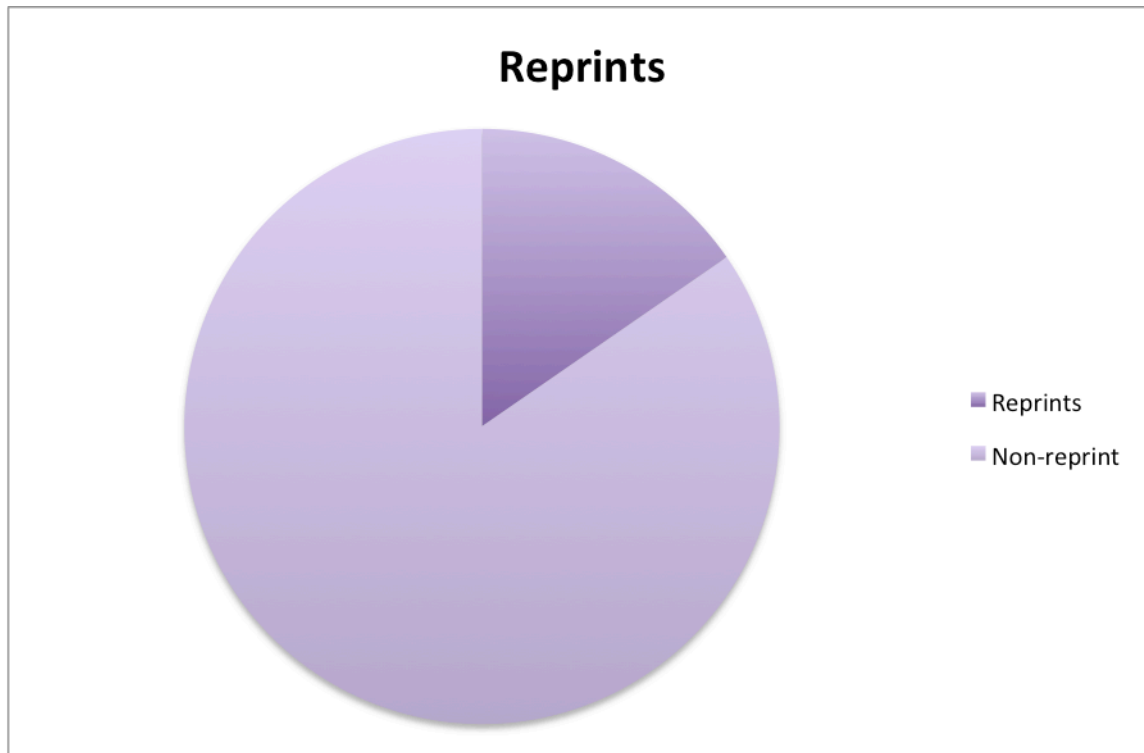


Figure 8 details the number of articles that were reprinted from other sources. There were only 143 reprinted articles from the 930 articles that were documented.

Conclusion

The overall research indicates a very positive future for *The Double Reed*. The article categories are mostly evenly distributed, and there were marginally few numbers of reprinted articles. There was a sizable difference in the number of articles by American authors verses international authors, but that was the only obvious disparity within the results.

The results of this study were not examined in order to present *The Double Reed* in a positive or negative light. They are presented to allow the IDRS to move

forward, progressively, in their publications in alignment with their constitution. The development and growth of *The Double Reed* over its lifetime thus far has been substantial, and hopefully signals a positive future for the publication and The International Double Reed Society.

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NOTE: Works with an asterisk were only consulted for the submitted research, but were consulted or used in previous research related to the project, and may be used in the final presentation of the Thesis.

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