THE HISTORY OF COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORKS OF I.A. APOKIN

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Igor A. Apokin (1936-2008)

Among numerous publications devoted to the history of computing technology, the books and articles by Igor A. Apokin (1936-2008), one of the first Soviet researchers into this subject, hold a special place.

Apokin’s professional biography is different from the careers of most historians of science and technology in the USSR who received their first higher education at the technological higher education institutions or natural science faculties of the universities. A historian/archivist, Apokin became involved in information analysis and consolidation, which led him to studying the ways of storing information and, on the whole, to exploring the themes associated with computing technology

Библиотека по автоматике

И. А. Апокин

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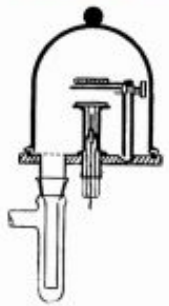

Издательство «Энергия»

Библиотека по автоматике

И. А. Апокин и Г. Ф. Кипаренко

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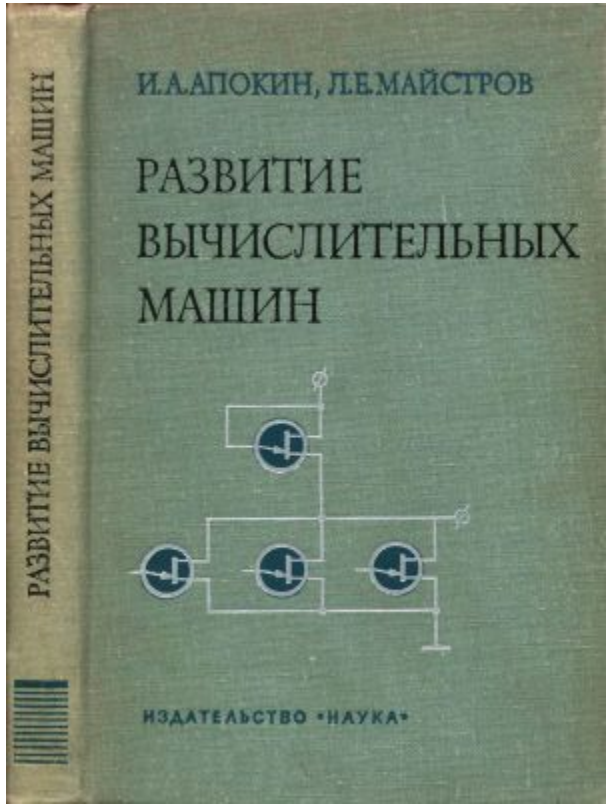
Издательство «Энергия»

In 1965, he became a postgraduate student at the Institute for the History of Science and Technology of the USSR Academy of Sciences and, in 1971, defended his thesis, “The development of universal electronic digital computing machines,” the first dissertation on this topic in the USSR.

In 1974, together with L.E. Maistrov, his colleague, friend and coauthor who was a historian of mathematics and an expert in old scientific devices, Apokin prepared a fundamental academic monograph, “Development of computing machines,” the first soviet attempt to provide historical analysis of the development of computing technologies from the primitive calculating devices used in the Paleolithic Era to electronic digital computing machines of the mid-20th century.



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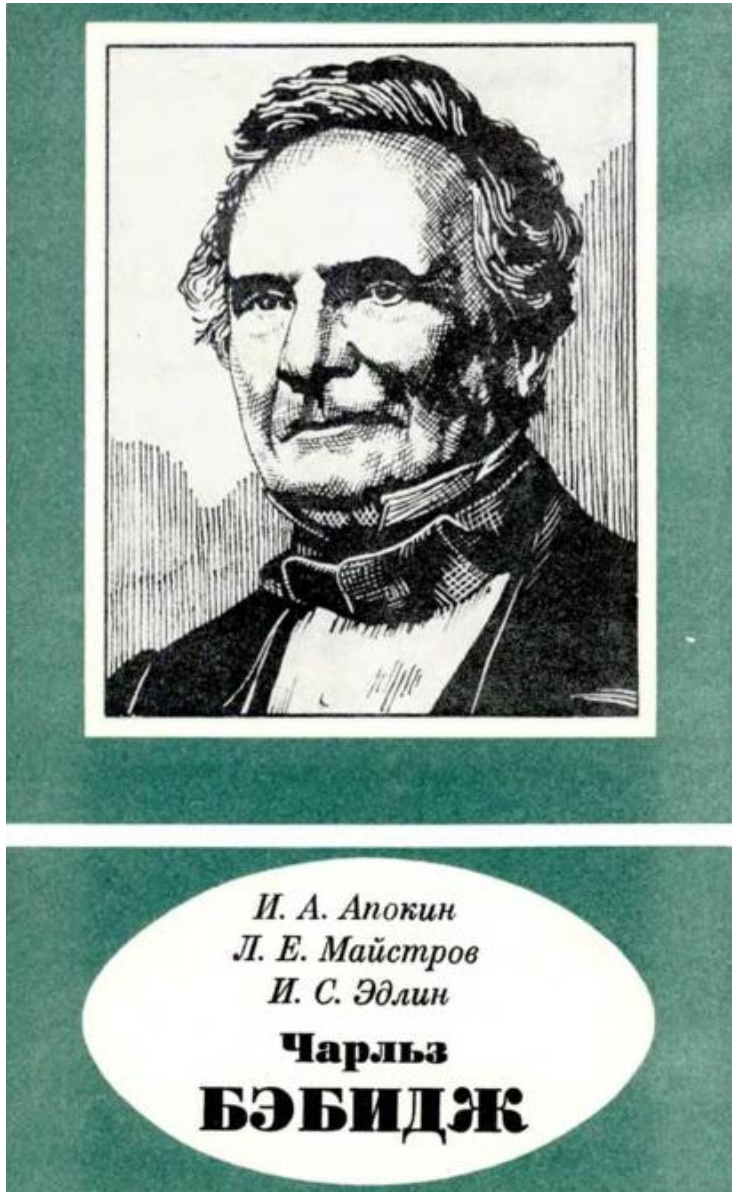
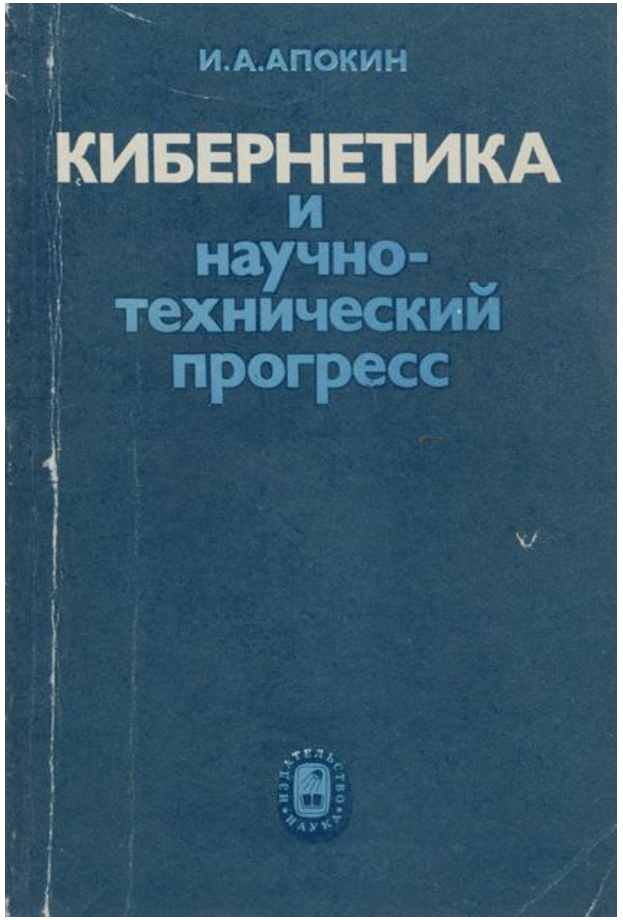


Their jointly written biography of Charles Babbage, co-authored with I.S. Edlin, was published in 1981.

In the early 1980s, the creative Apokin-Maistrov tandem planned to write another fundamental work, but after Maistrov passed away in 1982, the work on the monograph titled “The history of computing: from the primitive calculating devices to complex relay systems” was completed by Apokin only.

The new book published in 1990 had the same structure as the previous one although the historico-scientific analysis of the development of pre-electronic computing devices was significantly enhanced by using new sources, including a large number of works by international authors. Apokin has also authored more than 100 articles on the history of electronic computing machines.

The scholar’s interests covered not only historical but also a range of philosophical and sociological problems associated with computing technology, the patterns in its development and how it was connected to the general patterns in the progress of science and technology. He explored the theoretical problems of periodization and classification of computing and cybernetic systems, the role of particular machines and inventions in the history of computing technology and technological advancements.