

ards. Such treatments aid in giving modern and specific meanings to some of the generalities contained in C. C. Soule's early "Points of Agreement among Librarians as to Library Architecture," which the editors of the present book quote in part on page 3.

In recent years it has been gratifying to many to realize that the difficulties surrounding the adequacy of library buildings were being dealt with on a broad scale. The constituting of the cooperative committee is evidence that the problems involved have gained the attention of the institutional officers who

can do most about them. The manner and scope of its conferences reveal recognition of the importance of proper provision for scholarly libraries. The joint deliberations of educators, architects, engineers and librarians which the committee brought about, hardly can have failed to promote grasp of the issues entailed in library construction and collaboration in meeting them. The book now produced by the committee's editors reflects all this, while making available to a wide circle another helpful guide for building planners.—*Ernest J. Reece, White Plains, N.Y.*

## The Books of the Ancients

*Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration.* By Kurt Weitzmann. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947, viii, 219p. 56p. of plates. (Studies in Manuscript Illumination.) \$12.00.

*The World of Books in Classical Antiquity.* By H. L. Pinner. Leiden, A. W. Sijthoff, 1948, 64p., 14 plates.

On first sight the reason for this review may not be fully apparent to all readers of this journal.

These volumes are highly specialized studies of a body of material that seemingly lies more in the province of the classical scholar, archeologist and the student of the fine arts than in the sphere of interest of the librarian. Very few members of the library profession in America are likely to come into professional contact with any of the original material treated in these books. Nevertheless there are good reasons why the scholarly librarian has every right and some obligation to know these studies.

*Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, by Dr. Weitzmann, is a major contribution to our knowledge of the physical form of the book at the turning point from classical antiquity to the Christian Middle Ages. It clarifies and greatly broadens our understanding of the role of book illustration as a significant vehicle of literature. It presents challenging, even radical new views on the roots and the evolution of the illuminated codex. It rewrites an important chapter in the history of the book arts.

After nearly 20 years of experience as a

teacher of book arts in a graduate library school, your reviewer still believes that this field is an integral part of library science. The term "book arts" is perhaps somewhat limited, since we have come to include under that heading a rather broad approach to the study of the book. We mean by this term today the study of the social needs, the materials and processes, the artistic skills and schools, the personalities and organizations which have formed and are forming the book as the physical vehicle of a particular kind of long-range communication.

The concept of "book arts" as an integral part of library science is originally European. The presence of an important body of ancient books and manuscripts in every major European library is the natural reason for the concern of the academically trained librarian with this type of material. The fact that the first volume of Milkau's *Handbook of Library Science (Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft)* is entirely devoted to the history of writing and the book is tangible manifestation of this situation.

Your reviewer has had a chance to become acquainted with German postwar plans for library education. They show every sign of adherence to the old scholarly ideals. They also show a sad lack of understanding of the librarian's social function. The serious obligations and the splendid opportunities of the library in a democratic community are literally unknown in postwar Germany. In these respects the professional librarian there has everything to learn from his American colleague. Some beginning has been made by our

military government to promote an understanding of the American experiments and experiences in this field. Now is the time for the mutual fructification of two systems which are truly complementary.

Kurt Weitzmann's study is a case in point. It is a basic piece of research of the kind that has behind it decades of study and observation and that is likely to influence the course of investigation in its field for years to come. This is its most important contribution.

Every student of Christian illumination has seen that behind the pictures in the early codices stands a long tradition of illumination in the rolls of classical Greece and Rome. Our knowledge of those monuments is based on very scanty remnants of classical papyrus fragments. Beyond that the ancient papyrus illustrations were only indirectly known, seen as in a mirror in the effect they had had on the early codex. Weitzmann has now added a wealth of material to our knowledge by showing the reflection of those illustrated papyrus rolls on other simultaneous media and by coordinating this new evidence with the picture hitherto derived from the reflections in the parchment codices. He presents to us a large body of Hellenistic terra cotta bowls, metal tablets, Roman frieze sarcophagi, and other materials which all show scenes obviously derived from illuminated papyri. On the basis of this evidence he reconstructs the illuminated roll of classical Greece and Rome in a much more tangible manner and upon a much broader basis than hitherto attempted by anyone.

In so doing, Weitzmann reverses completely the picture that such scholars as Wickhoff and Birt have developed. To put it simply, these men have assumed that there were two broad classes of illustration. One was the text illustration, primarily documentary in function, such as the mathematical diagram, the astronomical constellation, the plant picture in the herbarium, all of which were placed in the column of the text. Then there was another type, the method of telling a story—Homer, Virgil, the Old and the New Testament—primarily by means of a continuous picture frieze, placed with or without accompanying text or captions onto the papyrus roll. Upon the transition from roll to codex these car-

toonlike sequences were cut up—sectionalized in the copying process.

Weitzmann now believes that there was originally only one kind of picture, namely the text illustration which was closely integrated with the column of writing. Evidence of continuity from scene to scene and the actual examples of continuous picture scrolls, which are indeed rather late in date, are explained by him not as survivals from or reflections of prototypes in the form of picture scrolls, but as the results of a later synthesis.

Your reviewer must confess to a great reluctance to follow his arguments in this matter. They seem to disregard first the fact that primitive writing in its pictographic stage was actually a form of story telling by a sort of animated continuity, and second that the papyrus roll offered a natural, easy medium for the eventual transfer of this form of communication to the book roll. There is also the consideration that in the case of the Homeric poems which were known by heart in their entirety, the picture scroll with little or no text would fulfil a natural function as a mnemotechnic device and as a pictorial primer that may have been enjoyed and "read" simultaneous with the hearing of the verses. There is no actual evidence of such a thing, but it is a possibility one cannot overlook. Weitzmann does not deny the possible existence of the early picture scroll, but he regards it as an exception rather than a normal practice.

There is no intention in this review to present all the arguments for and against the new theory. That is a matter that will take a long time and the cooperation of many specialists to settle. The truth may be found to lie somewhere in the middle ground, since these varying methods are not mutually exclusive.

The chief merit of Weitzmann's work is perhaps not the presentation of a new interpretation, challenging as it may be, but the thorough assembling and the complete presentation and interpretation of the original monuments that show what classical and early mediaeval text illumination looked like; also the discussion and critique of a large body of studies and interpretations by archaeologists, papyrologists and paleographers.

Among these studies two were overlooked by the author, the first one of primary importance, the second worthy of consideration:

Felix Reichmann's "The Booktrade at the Time of the Roman Empire," in the *Library Quarterly*, January 1938, and Henry Arthus Sanders' "The Beginning of the Modern Book; the Codex of the Classical Era," in the *Quarterly Review of the Michigan Alumnus*, Winter 1938.

Another omission to be regretted is the disregard of an important theory in the development of the roll, namely the change from the large, continuous scroll of the pre-Hellenistic period to the short roll of Alexandria, to which we owe the division of the Homeric poem into "Books," if the Greek paleographers have read the evidence correctly. Such a change would have had vital repercussions in the matter of illustration. Also one sensed that here and there was a lack of understanding for the intrinsically graphic nature of the pen drawing as a favored technique of the illustrator.

The binding which is common to the entire series, is unnecessarily drab for the subject it embraces. The reproductions, too, lack clarity and spark in many instances. That could hardly have been avoided, since many of the pictures are reproductions of reproductions originally of mediocre quality. One would have liked to see the use of fresh photographs for many of the objects, but that was obviously impossible, considering the troubled postwar conditions and the need for a very large body of pictorial material which is excellently selected and arranged.

The interest and the merits of H. L. Pinner's *The World of Books in Classical Antiquity* are found in a very different direction. This is not an attempt to present in its entirety the body of information and speculations about one particular aspect of the book in ancient Greece and Rome, but a survey of the entire field. The book immediately attracts attention for its beautiful and dignified printing and the simple, unassuming language of the author. He has divided his material into a few well-organized chapters on the discoveries of ancient books, physical characteristics, the book trades of Greece and Rome, bookshops in both these cultures, and a chapter on ancient libraries—both private and public.

Of all these matters the reader gets a brief but substantial view. There is no question that the little volume will make excellent text-

book reading for every student who first approaches the field and for every expert who wants to review the entire picture of the production and distribution of the literature of the ancients.

The author's method is quickly explained. He bases his account on the primary sources, the ancient fragments as they have survived, and particularly on the references to the world of books in the writings of classical authors. These citations are carefully documented in a separate section at the back. There is no reference to any modern studies of the subject and there is also some evidence that these have not been too carefully consulted. It seems to me doubtful whether anyone could build up a coherent, reasonably complete picture of the world of ancient books without consulting the studies of Birt, Sir E. M. Thompson, Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, Schubart, Wattenbach and the many other authorities in the field, and I am sure Mr. Pinner knows their work. The decision, which I assume was deliberate, to concentrate only on the evidence of the ancient world and to disregard modern attempts at their interpretation, was a bold one. The beneficial result in this book is its refreshing simplicity, its absence of controversial matter, the feeling of closeness to the far-gone world of ancient books. Nevertheless, a certain price had to be paid for these advantages. For one thing, the picture is not absolutely complete. Not every possible evidence is included; not every possibility explored. One could cite several instances where more could have been said, particularly on the question of physical characteristics, on the predecessors of the short roll of Alexandria; on the parchment codex as a cheaper substitute for the papyrus roll. At one point the term "palimpsest" is used in such a peculiar manner that one begins to wonder if the author really knows exactly what it designates. Also, the body of secondary evidence, which has permitted much fruitful speculation, has not been considered.

To sum up the impression that one gets from the reading of the volume: An excellent first introduction and a good panorama of the entire territory, but not a final, fully authoritative and exhaustive presentation.—*Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, School of Library Service, Columbia University.*