

II did not encode their Navajo language messages, stating that “they could speak in plain language; no need to encode.” According to a number of resources, the Navajo created a specific code based on their native language to transmit messages, to the extent that Navajos unfamiliar with the encoding were unable to understand the messages (see the *Encyclopedia of Espionage, Intelligence, and Security*. Detroit: Gale 2004, Vol. 3, p 263–265 and U.S. military records (www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-2.htm).

The provided end-of-chapter citations are inconsistent, and attempts to verify references can sometimes be frustrating. Some quotations from monographs provide page numbers, while others do not. While discussing Franklin D. Roosevelt’s use of the radio during the Great Depression, Meadow quotes “a member of his staff.” However, the citation includes only the name of the book, not the page number of the quotation itself or the name of this anonymous staff member he deems important enough to quote. In another instance, he fails to provide page numbers for a quote from *James Boswell’s Life of Samuel Johnson*. Later in the same paragraph, however, he quotes Plato and provides a page number in the citation.

These are the kinds of problems—poor reference choices, factual errors, incon-

sistent citations—that should be cleared up in the final revision process before a book actually goes to press. In addition to these problems, there are scores of other mistakes that suggest that a final, comprehensive edit never occurred. Citations in the bibliography are not consistent, and sometimes omit dates (the year “004”) or are not spaced correctly. Words appear in mid-paragraph with incorrectly placed hyphens, as if the text had been transferred from one format to another without checking the formatting of imported text. Chapter titles in the running heads are extremely inconsistent, and, in one case, an entire chapter’s running head is emblazoned with the title from the *previous* chapter. The editing job was so poor that I thought I might have an advance copy or galley, but everything about the binding, publication information, and promotional literature suggested that, alas, the copy I received was a final published edition.

These problems are so persistent that they detract the reader from the content and purpose of *Messages, Meaning, and Symbols*, which is to serve as an introductory text for general readers. This assemblage of unprofessional book layout, inconsistent citation formatting, poor fact checking, and reliance on such resources as hobbyist Web sites results in a book that I would hesitate to assign to entry-level students.—*Gene Hyde, Radford University.*

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Staikos, Konstantinos. *The History of the Library in Western Civilization—Volume II: From Cicero to Hadrian*. New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2005. 428p. \$75 (ISBN: 1584561483). LC 2003-58221.

This is the second of a projected five-volume history of “the library” in the West, freshly rendered into English from the Greek original by Timothy Cullen. The series title is actually a bit deceiving. The arc of Staikos’ journey begins in Greek antiquity and will end with the exile of Greek manuscripts in Italy, following the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the fifteenth century. The writer’s focus

on the legacy of Greece as the sacred deposit of Western civilization is clear and unambiguous. Even when writing about Rome, his gaze is eastward, and perhaps rightfully so, given the pronounced Hellenism of imperial Roman culture. While the Caesars dotted the Palatine Hill with magnificent public libraries—stocked with booty carried in from the east—it was in the Greek east that libraries and “bookish” culture flourished as nowhere else in the empire. The western empire, that is, everything north and west of Rome, receives barely a nod from Staikos. To be sure, the author is following his sources here: the preponderance of the evidence, textual and archeological, is from or relates to the east, but the Hellenophilia of the text is unmistakable. This said, Staikos here offers us nothing less than a generous survey of Roman cultural activity and practices from the late Republic through the second century of the Empire. Cicero and Hadrian serve as bookends for a narrative that emphasizes the creation and growth of libraries as the natural outgrowth of a lively and dynamic literary culture. In the course of the story, the wealth of the private yields to the splendors of the public. Cicero’s seven villas each had a library, but collectively they would have been no match for any of Hadrian’s monumental creations two centuries later. With the expansion and consolidation of the empire came treasure and booty—and, inevitably, the libraries in which to house them.

There is much to like and admire about this volume: its breadth of interest, its fulsome documentation, its many handsome illustrations. Staikos assiduously tracks down and shares known references to libraries and revisits the relevant archeological sites. The reader will not be cheated. Nonetheless, this volume does have its frustrating sides as well. In the first place, the amount of space actually given over to “libraries” in the Roman world is relatively small—perhaps less than one-fifth of the total volume. While Staikos spends much time rehearsing the

literary and intellectual history of Rome and even offers us a potted history of Roman architecture, he has comparatively little to say, for example, about the contents of libraries, their organization and arrangement. This may be a case of an author simply following his sources, but the cumulative effect is that the context dwarfs and obscures the subject. Staikos is diligent in sticking to his sources, but his bald summaries lack the interpretive deftness that would have yielded a richer reading of the texts and archeological sites. At the center of this large book and long journey is, alas, an imaginative vacuum. Thus, one of the most suggestive points the author makes about Roman public library buildings is that they were usually set alongside structures housing complementary activities and were even, as often as not, multiuse facilities themselves. Drama, recitations, concerts, reading, copying, and physical culture could all take place in adjacent settings, sometimes even in the same space. They were lively sites of diverse creative engagements. Libraries were not the isolated zones of a later period but integrated fully into the *paideia* of the time. Had Staikos bothered to unpack this observation instead of simply repeating it, the result would have been a much richer, more informative portrait of libraries in the Roman Empire. Nor does Staikos provide us with much guidance about the content and arrangement of libraries, other than noting that the scrolls might either be texts or archival records pertaining to family, business, and politics.

I also confess to being put off by the large, bulky format of the volume, its *faux* elegance, typographic pomposity, and oddly chosen illustrations. Here we have a workmanlike text that borders on the pedestrian, packaged as a *livre de luxe*, a scholarly monograph dressed up like a bad imitation of a European art book, replete with glossy pages, generous leading, marginal borders and notes, and lots of color everywhere. While there are many fine illustrations that work well with the

text, there are also many odd selections. The finely wrought reconstructions of libraries done by contemporary artists and scholars are enormously valuable in bringing some life to the text, but the legion of dubious portraits and architectural fantasies from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seem oddly chosen and out of place in this work of careful scholarship.

One would have thought that a work ostensibly focused on the material instantiations of culture would have paid at least some attention to the carriers of texts, but Staikos is not really interested in talking about material formats. The word “book” is ubiquitous throughout the text, but what a “book” was in antiquity is not part of the author’s agenda. If you are interested in the multiple ways and means the Romans had at their disposal for instantiating texts—all kinds of texts—you will be better served looking elsewhere. Indeed, the entire material culture of “the book” is largely ignored here: from the making of surfaces (papyri, skin, stone) to the making and formatting of texts.

The proliferation of private and public libraries throughout the Empire was an important artifact of the competition for status and prestige that pulsed within the elite classes. In this special setting, libraries were more than just trophies: they embodied the highest ideals and aspirations of the governing classes. Even the crassest and cruelest of the Caesars was, to some extent or another, a patron of the arts and culture and personally invested in them. Libraries were, Staikos reminds us, enmeshed in and thoroughly integrated into Roman life—at least at the top—in ways impossible in later ages. Staikos hints at this fusion, but interested readers will want to turn elsewhere for a fuller portrait.—*Michael Ryan, Columbia University.*

Book Talk: Essays on Books, Booksellers, Collecting, and Special Collections.
Eds. Robert H. Jackson and Carol Z. Rothkopf. New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll,

2006. 265p. \$49.95 (ISBN 1584561882).
LC 2006-296809.

Sponsored by the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), an organization that fosters communication and interaction among members of book clubs in the United States, this book contains eighteen essays pertaining to rare books and manuscripts. Written by noted book collectors, booksellers, special collections librarians, and a master printer/publisher, the essays are grouped in four categories: books, booksellers, collectors, and special collections. Most of the pieces originated as presentations given by the authors between 1997 and 2005 at FABS-sponsored symposia and book study tours.

It is not surprising that the editors chose to assemble these engaging essays. An avid book collector and author of articles pertaining to varied aspects of printing history, Robert H. Jackson is vice chair of FABS. Carol Z. Rothkopf, a collector of modern British poetry, served for nine years as chair of the Grolier Club’s Committee on Publications. In 2002, she edited another Oak Knoll title, Robert E. Stoddard’s *A Library-Keeper’s Business*.

Although *Book Talk* will be of great interest to collectors, dealers, special collections curators, and librarians whose careers reach back several decades, some of its themes are relevant to aspects of academic librarianship in general. The impact of the Internet is a thread woven throughout this rich tapestry of text. Far from making the printed book obsolete, the Web has contributed to its proliferation. In his piece on “The Past, Present, and Future of the Book,” Jason Epstein points out that it is easier than ever for an author to become published, although fewer books of enduring value can be found among today’s mass-market titles. Bookselling has changed radically. Epstein notes that large retailers have replaced small bookshops, and several authors, including Tom Congalton, Peter Kraus, and Anthony Garnett, bemoan the Internet’s negative impact on traditional walk-in used and rare book shops with a broad range of stock. More common today are specialists