

David McKitterick. *Old Books, New Technologies: The Representation, Conservation, and Transformation of Books since 1700.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 286p. (ISBN: 978-1-107-03593-5). LCCN: 2012-38444.

From his base at Trinity College, Cambridge, David McKitterick has been one of our best scholar-librarians, and his contributions to book history studies have been fundamental. He has now given us another important monograph that all special collections librarians would benefit from reading. While the title of the book is an accurate summary of its contents, it disguises McKitterick's real purpose: and that is to provide a fresh context for making sense of the enormous technological shift that is happening in the production, consumption, and preservation of texts today, and the implications of these for antiquarian or "old books," as McKitterick prefers to designate our collections of rare books. The great value of the present book is that it attempts to provide a larger, longer-term context for understanding what is happening today not (primarily) to new books but to retrospective collections, as more and more are digitized and made available on the web. If the meaning and status of these historical artifacts are being challenged today in new and menacing ways, it is not for the first time. The history of the transmission and evaluation of old books is itself the record of shifting approaches to these artifacts.

McKitterick's potential target area is quite large, but most of this book's attention is focused on 19th-century Britain. The questions that interest McKitterick and drive his narrative involve the ways in which collectors, book sellers, and institutional caretakers conserved, restored, studied, and copied old books during the past three centuries. What we learn is that our present constellation of approaches to and beliefs about the care and value of old books is at one end of a spectrum that includes along the way a real hodgepodge of attitudes and practices whose conse-

quences all special collections librarians live with today. If current "best practices" value above all else the "historical integrity" of the artifact, no matter how worn and tattered, past customs recommended a series of interventions that altered irreversibly the nature, and thus the meaning, of the artifact. Our current historicism is very different from that of the past. Where contemporary book sellers, librarians, and some collectors look for old books that wear the histories of their uses in plain view, their ancestors preferred to disguise those histories in favor of various schemes of "restoration" to an imagined "original." Washing, perfecting, and rebinding were part of the standard toolkit of earlier generations of book people, though they are still being practiced—alas—today.

While this will not be news to most librarians, what makes McKitterick's narrative so compelling is the wealth of detail it includes as well as the breadth of cultural objects it embraces. McKitterick alerts us at every point that what was true for books was true for sculptures, paintings, buildings, and the whole repertoire of culturally significant objects. If current professional *nostra* are a variation on the Hippocratic Oath "do no harm," that is only because we value very different properties and characteristics in old books than did our predecessors. What future generations of librarians in the digital age will value is something that increasingly preoccupies us now.

One significant index of the ways in which an age values cultural artifacts is the investments it makes in copying them. Copying, of course, is a two-sided coin: it can serve worthwhile educational and recreational aims, but it can also be a scoundrel's *métier* whose purpose is fraud and deception. While the copying and reproduction of art objects had been in place for some while, certain key inventions in the 19th century suddenly made it possible to copy printed books easily and relatively inexpensively. First lithography and then photography provided the bases for transforming the making of

copies from laboriously hand-produced tracings to mechanized routines. By the mid-century, it had become possible to marry the two, and photolithography began to make more or less faithful copies of old books accessible to a wider and wider public. While fastidious readers will disdain such copies, McKitterick correctly notes how the availability of old books in facsimile form helped increase their value and regard as cultural objects.

Which leads to the final section of this excellent monograph: public exhibitions. If you have a copy, if you value the copy, would you not prize seeing the original even more? Before the rise of public museums in the 19th century, it would have been hard for anyone other than scholars, collectors, and booksellers to actually see old books. That began to change with regular displays at the great national museums and libraries in Paris and London in the 19th century, and then more broadly. The prestige of old books soared as culturally esteemed objects, an observation that culminates in McKitterick's book in two happy outcomes: the huge and important Caxton exhibition of 1877 in South Kensington and the parallel creation of what essentially became the modern bibliography that continues to inform praxis and scholarship today. The Caxton exhibition brought into one location some 5,000 books and manuscripts, and it did so in a way that reflected a new, historically and technically grounded appreciation of the relationship between the processes of making books and the books themselves. The exhibition thus both enshrined Caxton and printing in the national British epic of freedom, commerce, and Protestantism, while also giving birth to modern study of antiquarian books. Fittingly, the dust jacket of McKitterick's book is an 1877 engraving of "Caxton shewing the first specimen of his printing to King Edward IV & the royal family in the abbey of Westminster, 1477." But this happy ending is not, of course, the end.

The books in our special collections bear the marks of their own, individual

histories—even where all evidence of "historicity" has been deliberately erased, effaced, or otherwise eliminated. They have been and will be valued differently at different times by different groups of people. The old books in McKitterick's narrative are often as much the victims of love and care as they are of neglect, indifference, or—worse—of mischief. While technological inventions play a major role in McKitterick's story, technology only provides tools; it is not a driver. That said, the dark cloud that hovers silently over this book is the arrival of a thoroughly digital world, completely satisfied with and by digital surrogates, that cease to value (to any meaningful extent) the material legacies represented in our collections. McKitterick's is not an elegy for the old book; it is too smart for that. It may be that the proliferation of easily accessible digital surrogates of rare books will make the physical originals of greater cultural value in the eyes of an expanding constituency for them. But the balance of this fine book does not encourage an easy optimism. —
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Library Assessment Workgroup (Lesley University). *Faculty Information and Research Needs: A Qualitative Study of Lesley University and Episcopal Divinity School Faculty.* Cambridge, Mass.: Lesley University Library, 2013. 126p. Available online at <http://ir.flo.org/lesley/fileDownloadForInstitutionalItem.action?itemId=2096&itemFileId=2101>.

This qualitative study examines information needs and the research and instructional behavior of faculty, as well as faculty perceptions of information use by students. Participants include faculty from the Art Institute of Boston, Episcopal Divinity School, Lesley College of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, and the Graduate Schools of Education and of Arts and Social Sciences. Methods are modeled on an ethnographic approach outlined by the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries Project (ERIAL). Findings are based on