1994

The world of libraries in antiquity and the renaissance : the heritage of libraries and library science

Minoti Pakrasi
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.rxcn-f6e5>
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heritage of libraries and library science**

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San Jose State University, 1994

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**THE WORLD OF LIBRARIES IN ANTIQUITY AND THE RENAISSANCE:
THE HERITAGE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY SCIENCE**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Library and Information Science

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Library Science

by

Minoti Pakrasi

May, 1994

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ABSTRACT

THE WORLD OF LIBRARIES IN ANTIQUITY AND THE RENAISSANCE: THE HERITAGE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY SCIENCE

by Minoti Pakrasi

This thesis studies the evolution of libraries, taking into consideration the environments in which they were born, prospered, died, and were revived. The accumulation of written documents formed the first archives. The preservation of written records for religious, political, economic, and cultural reasons led to the formation of libraries. As one age imitated and improved on a predecessor, the library endured, to become a monument to civilization itself.

A literature search on the history of libraries provides works discussing specific aspects of library-related issues — a chronological presentation of names, dates, and facts. The approach used here is unique in that it goes beyond looking at libraries in isolation. Libraries, as integral to ancient society as they are now, are studied in terms of their contents, personnel, users, location, form, and function. The result is a work that embraces the world of libraries in Antiquity and the Renaissance.

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INTRODUCTION

In books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream.

The Hero as a Man of Letters
Thomas Carlyle

Rapidly changing technology has propelled the library into an information age dominated by computer networks and multimedia systems. In an increasingly automated world, it is easy to forget how far the institution has come. Establishments dedicated to the preservation and reproduction of the most important accomplishments of civilization have existed for thousands of years. One of the richest legacies of history is the library.

Of the few institutions to have endured over the millennia, the library has adapted well to the changes of patronage, organization, and usage. Ironically, libraries, considered the repository of the intellectual attainments of a civilization, were invariably affected by conquest: the buildings razed, their contents seized and removed or expunged. Yet, ancient literature, art, philosophy, and religion have not been erased. We still hear "the voice of the past" and are influenced by it.

Much of the physical evidence of the original buildings of ancient libraries has been lost: the few remains of structures and materials provide a tantalizing hint at what the complexes must have been at their prime. Our knowledge of the libraries depends heavily on literary documentation. Though the original texts have long since disappeared, a remarkable number of copies from later ages are still extant. A study of these sources reveals that libraries have not changed as much over the centuries as one might expect.

Indeed, many of the issues that librarians, users, and budget committees face today have been discussed for over two thousand years. In parts of the ancient world, public libraries were taken for granted as state-sponsored services. To the elite, a personal collection was an essential feature of private residences. The proper housing and conservation of a vast collection intrigued architects. While philosophers questioned censorship, and authors copyright regulations, politicians and scholars argued over funding. These are familiar, much-discussed topics in library literature today. While no comparable texts exist, references in other works provide an image of libraries in Classical and Hellenistic Greece, Republican and Imperial Rome, and Renaissance Florence.

Renaissance libraries took their inspiration from the classical world. The Roman library system was built on a tradition already two thousand years old. Little is known about the Etruscan influence on Roman libraries; the influence of Hellenism is pervasive not only in art, but also in secular literature and its collection. The concept of the library, however, began not in Greece, but further east. Long before the academic libraries of Athens and the royal collections of Alexandria were the tablet treasuries of the Minoans and Myceneans, the federal depositories of the Hittites, the imperial archives of Mesopotamia, and the sacred libraries of the Egyptians. The search for the earliest libraries takes one into the distant past.

**PROTO-LIBRARIES:
ARCHIVES IN EGYPT, MESOPOTAMIA,
ANATOLIA, AND BRONZE AGE GREECE**

As late as 1938, it was explained ... that in order to be considered library material tablets must have been baked; "otherwise the designation as library is not justified but at best the term 'archives.'"

**Archives in the Ancient World
Ernst Posner**

In the religious centers of Thebes and Memphis, the priests of Ptah created and maintained the earliest collections of liturgical and ritualistic texts. An integral part of the temple precinct, the library was protected by the gods: Thoth, "Lord of the House of Books" and Seshait, "Lady of libraries."¹ Here were composed the earliest hymns to Osiris, Isis, and Ra, written on sheets of papyrus, the scrolls preserved for future use.

By the second millennium B.C.E., idealized autobiographical accounts emphasizing a morally correct life were being written down. As Knapp explains, "Preoccupation with moral and ethical problems led to the development of a rich genre of 'wisdom literature' in Babylonia and Egypt."² Written by highly educated scribes, these *Instructions* contained directives for proper conduct. Later, lamentations, admonitions against social evils, and prophecies were also included. One of the earliest, the Vizier Ptah-Hotep's counsel to his son, dates to the reign of King Izzei of the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2450 B.C.E.).³

Even if much of this literature was transmitted orally, it was also recorded on skins or, more commonly, on papyrus scrolls. Given the fragility of papyrus, the large number still surviving, nearly four thousand years later, indicates that a great deal of care was taken in the preparation of the papyrus for scrolls. The manufacture of high-grade papyrus for

writing had become a fine art at an early age. Avrin remarks on the excellence of the ancient sheets:

Papyrus was so finely wrought before the Eighteenth Dynasty [1580 B.C.E.], so thin (one-tenth of a millimeter) and translucent, that is difficult to distinguish between the horizontal and vertical sides. ... The high quality of early dynastic papyrus was never matched again; late dynastic papyrus, however, was still better than that of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt [323 B.C.E. to 395 C.E.], and the latter superior to the Islamic product.⁴

The black and red inks with which the scrolls were inscribed were also organic: the former consisted of soot with gum arabic; powdered red ochre provided the latter. Palettes in which they were mixed and the pens used to execute the painterly hieroglyphics have been found in large numbers in tombs. Writing required artistic skill. The scribe commanded a high position in both the temple and the royal court. It is probable that the librarian, of whom less is known, was also an educated individual, skilled in the organization and conservation of the written materials. Preservation was made easier by the fact that only a select few handled the books once they were placed in the library.

Since the natural environment conserved, the human element in the destruction of the hieratic libraries is much to blame. Religious complexes were invariably targeted by invaders intent on imposing another faith on the region. Fire easily obliterated the holdings of entire libraries. (Under the circumstances, it is remarkable how many papyri have survived.) Much of the information about the libraries themselves come from inscriptions in stone. Thompson describes those on the walls of the library at Edfu:

Over the entrance is carved a large palette, and on the walls of the interior are graven apposite texts and emblems of the instruments employed by the scribes. Most important of all is the catalogue of the hieratical books graven upon one of the walls, bearing the title, "List of cases containing the books on the great rolls of skins." The books were divided into two registers or catalogues. Twelve coffers of works were specified in the first catalogue, and twenty-two in the second. There is evidence of a logical classification.⁵

In contrast, fire proved to be the savior of many of the ancient archives of Mesopotamia. Here, clay tablets were the main medium of documentation. While the tablets themselves may have been unbaked, clay, when fired, becomes more durable. Reade comments on the tablets from the library in the palace of Assurbanipal (668-631 B.C.E.):

Most of the scholarly "library" texts written in royal scriptoria, together with some other official documents, are or were distinguished ... by their clay. Unbaked, this is a fine red colour. Since clay tablets naturally turn red on baking, it is sometimes very difficult to decide whether these Kuyunjik pieces were deliberately baked or not. Some of them were indeed so effectively baked during the conflagration of 612 BC that the job might as well have been done professionally. On the whole it seems likely that the "library" texts ... were not baked originally. The same applies to the royal letters, many state documents, and the private archives; these generally are made of any one of a wide range of inferior clays, only baked if at all in 612.⁶

As a result, a vast quantity of clay tablets have been found, some dating back to the third millennium B.C.E. to the early Sumerian settlements in Ur, Uruk, Nippur, and Mari.

While they varied in size and shape,

The most popular form of clay tablet was the slightly oblong, pillow-shaped tablet, with flattened topside and more convex underside. The average size was 50 x 25 - 30 mm. The text was written freehand in a compact, minute, clear script in horizontal rows starting at the top, left-hand corner and ending in the lower right-hand corner on the flatter side of the tablet.⁷

Although the contents of libraries may have survived the ravages of war, the establishment of permanent collections requires political and economic security. The fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C.E. saw the rise of strong, centralized governments in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Anatolia. A certain degree of stability encouraged the progress of writing and preserving documents. Often written in Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of the period, these were increasingly secular. Hymns and liturgical material continued to be produced, but matters of state were also recorded.

As early as the Sargonic period (2334-2154 B.C.E.), 4700 tablets from "at least sixteen sites throughout greater Mesopotamia, including Sumer, Akkad, the Diyala region, Gasur, Susa, and the Jezirah" registered the "management of land, produce, livestock, and valuable assets."⁸ By 1300 B.C.E., foreign trade accounts were being kept in the Assyrian state archives of Shamshi-Adad, while in Hammurabi's capital at Babylon, laws were codified and deposited.

Unfortunately, not all the documents have survived as well. Indeed, many from later periods have completely disappeared. The use of non-durable material was partly responsible. Though clay was used for the more important ones, as Parpola points out,

A large number of documents and records were drawn up on materials other than clay: wax-covered writing boards, papyrus and leather. There is every possibility that exactly the kind of documents that were liable to be stored in state archives (international treaties and correspondence, war diaries and sketches made during military campaigns, architectural and engineering plans, and other documents relating to military, administrative, and economic planning, etc.) were largely written on such materials, which of course means that much if not most of the contents of these archives is irretrievably lost.⁹

During the Neo-Babylonian era (625-529 B.C.E.), Aramaic replaced Akkadian as the spoken language and was responsible for the disappearance of cuneiform. As a result, Dandamayev observes, "only a very insignificant part of the economic and legal documents was written on clay, and the bulk of the texts was written in Aramaic on leather and papyrus."¹⁰ However, with nearly 14,000 cuneiform tablets found from this period, clay tablets and the Akkadian script were still used, at least for the more important documents. Dandamayev continues, "Their contents are very diverse: promissory notes, contracts concerning the sale and rent of land, houses and other property, documents of international trade, records or court proceedings, etc."¹¹ The lost materials probably contained similar data. At their height, the total holdings of the archives must have been very large indeed.

It could be argued that the archives of the Mesopotamian empires were depositories rather than libraries. Posner translates Wendel:

In regard to their relationship to library material, it now seems commonly acknowledged that "in the ancient Orient no distinction was made, as a matter of principle, between record and literary product, between archival establishments and libraries. Every accumulation of clay tablets would start from archival holdings and possibly expand by taking in literary pieces."¹²

As the nature of the materials grew more varied, the archives began to be organized and operated as libraries. The librarian, probably an appointed official, bore the Akkadian title of *Nisu-duppi-satri*, "Man of the written tablets." The first to hold this post, created during the reign of Emuq-sin of Babylon in second millennium B.C.E. is believed to be Amil-anu.¹³ From the archaeological finds it is possible to deduce that a large part of the librarian's responsibilities included the organization of the material and the arrangement of the archive/library. The practice of marking holdings with a property stamp dates to the mid-seventh century library of Assurbanipal in Nineveh. Library classification, using lists and catalogs, also began in Assyria. Seven such catalogs still exist. Of one catalog compiled between 716 and 684 B.C.E., Thompson notes:

The chief portion of the Kalakh or Nimrod [Nimrud] Collection was written under the direction of a librarian named Nabu-zuqub-gina, who had charge of the collection. ... The catalogue entries included the title of the work, the number of lines, the contents, the *incipit* or opening words — which served also as the title — and each of its important parts or subdivisions. There was even some sort of classification.¹⁴

The tablets were numbered and marked to identify their location — the earliest call numbers. In addition to identification marks, title-based catalogs facilitated access to the materials. State collections and depositories often took up several rooms in the administrative wings of the palace complex. The finds from the excavations of the royal palace of Ebla (modern Tell-Mardikh, Syria) provide a clue as to how the archives were

situated and the tablets assembled. They date to the second half of the third millennium B.C.E. and can be taken as representative of archives of the era. Paolo Matthiae:

The Administrative Quarter ... included rooms for the storage of the archive documents. ... As [for] the carriage of the documents, which were quite heavy, [they] were put on wooden planks. ... The cuneiform tablets were permanently kept on the planks of the wooden shelves of the main archive room, and temporarily preserved on the suspended shelves of the small archive room, on the high built mudbrick benches of the trapezoidal store, and on the low mudbrick benches of the outer vestibule. ... In the main archive room each wall had three shelves, 0.80m deep, and 0.50m high; the shelf was 2.90 m long against the East wall, and 3.15m long against the North Wall.¹⁵

The variety of the collections would have attracted different kinds of users: it is unlikely that the royal libraries were reserved for the exclusive use of the ruling family. Scholars no doubt had access to the great works of literature, including the Babylonian Creation epic, *Enuma Elish*, and the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Priests could deposit and use hymns, omens, and incantations in temple libraries. A large number of liturgical materials was also found in Assurbanipal's library, which, Posner adds, "are intimately related to the process of Mesopotamian government and could be considered of record rather than literary character."¹⁶ The complex nature of Mesopotamian laws must have required that lawyers use the relevant legal sources regularly. As the volume of trade increased, merchants and their agents (and the revenue board) probably found extremely useful the accounts of routes used, materials traded, and the political climate in other regions. Government staff maintaining war and diplomatic records, as well as courtiers and scribes preparing royal communications depended on well-organized archive-libraries.

The period of internationalism during the second millennium B.C.E. extended beyond the Mesopotamian empires to Egypt, Anatolia, the Levant, and as far as Greece. This has been borne out by finds of similar information in contemporaneous archives

excavated at Ugarit, Khorsabad, Tell-el Amarna, Boghaz Köy, Knossos, and Pylos. It is interesting to note that most of the tablets are in Akkadian, even those from Egypt and Hattusas, where distinctly different languages and scripts were used. The Greeks, far removed from the Fertile Crescent, abandoned Akkadian in favor of Greek; Linear A and B replaced cuneiform. The tablets are an important source for dating the events of the era. Names often provide clues: Akhenaten is called *Naphururiya* in a Babylonian letter.¹⁷ Equals address each other as "brother" and recognize both power and kinship. Trade reports, letters, and inventories of gifts exchanged provide an insight into the lives of the rulers who kept up a regular correspondence with each other and their vassals and allies.

The largest number and best preserved tablets of this period come from Akhenaten's capital at Amarna, where records were kept, not on papyrus, but on clay tablets.¹⁸ The Amarna letters, as they are known today, reveal the standing between Egypt and the Mesopotamian and Anatolian empires. In general, there was an attempt made to keep the relationship between the courts cordial. Two letters from Burnaburias III of Babylon to Akhenaten of Egypt illustrate the nature of Bronze Age kingship. One explains in detail the cause of a temporary breach in friendly relations between him and the pharaoh.

The letter is long and involved, the first side discussing the thorny problem of an apparent diplomatic snub on the part of Akhenaten, who failed to respond to the sickness of Burnaburias. The letter recounts in detail the history of the episode, concluding with the realization on Burnaburias' part that Akhenaten had not had enough time to find out about his sickness, and his assurance that Akhenaten will doubtless send a gift as soon as he does find out.¹⁹

In another, he expresses concern over trade routes. Complaining to Akhenaten of the difficulties caused by the Caananites to the Babylonian caravans, he seeks the pharaoh's assistance in preventing further delays.²⁰ There is no evidence that Akhenaten took any action against his vassals or that he sent Burnaburias any gifts in apology. Another

important set of correspondence is the exchange between the widow of Tutankhamun and the Hittite king Suppiluliuma, the gist, in Kitchen's words, being:

Tutankamun's queen asks Sp. for a son to make him king of Egypt. Sp. sends envoy to investigate, captures Carchemis, ... and returns home for winter. In spring, envoys bring a further plea from the Egyptian queen. Sp. agrees and sends son Zannanza to Egypt. Zannanza is murdered by the Egyptians.²¹

Despite the personal tone of the letters, the fact that they were found among the ruins of the Records Office — an administrative department — rather than in the king's private library indicates that they were considered documents of state and could be read by scribes and officials outside the royal family. Even if communications were conducted in comparative secrecy, upon being deposited in the archives, the letters may have become more accessible. Once open to the court, the information would have made political plots, such as the assassination of the Hittite prince, easier. Issues and policies regarding security and access in the Amarna archive/libraries are still obscure.

The Egyptian-Hittite negotiations were also extensively documented in Hattusas. As at Amarna, these included letters, royal proclamations, and accounts of wars waged and the subsequent treaties. Trade agreements with Assyria, Arzawa, and the Greeks were also kept on file. Otten mentions the correspondence between the pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite king, Hattusili III, and copies of the famous peace treaties between the two countries.²² In addition, canonical material, including oaths and ritual instructions made up a large part of the collection. With increasing diversity, the archives must have begun to resemble libraries. Tablets may have been organized using title- or subject-based classification tables. Otten mentions Laroche's observation that though the titles in this early public access catalog do not correspond to any known texts, it is probable that they describe ancient documents.²³

The overseer of the archives may well have been a librarian. While more is known about scribes from tablet colophons, librarians possibly held similar positions. In describing scribal society, Mauer uses the expressions "Schreiberdynastien" (based on patronymic notations in the colophons) and "Schreiberkaste".²⁴ Parallels in the library community could mean the Keeper of the Tablets was a hereditary profession of the "librarian dynasty" or an appointed member from the "librarian class." Like scribes, librarians had to be well-educated with good linguistic skills. Domestic records may have been in Hittite; foreign documents would have included Akkadian cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Hebrew, and even Greek Linear A and B. Given the size of the archive and its multi-lingual collection, it is conceivable that slaves captured in foreign wars were trained to assist the Hittite librarian.

Of the four superpowers (Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria being the other three), the Hittites had the maximum contact with the Greeks. Though not always harmonious, the Hittites maintained diplomatic and trade relations with their neighbors to the west. With Greek expansion and settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor, territorial skirmishes between the colonies and Hittite allies and dependents were inevitable. Military dispatches were tabulated by the Hittite Foreign Office, as were the accords reached by the warring factions. If this was indeed the period of the Homeric epics, the Hattussas archives may provide the only clues to Greek warfare on the Anatolian coast. Experts have argued at length over Greek place and proper names found on Hittite tablets. Leonard Palmer touches on the subject:

Credence will increase if we can operate with clusters which exhibit a coherent geographical pattern. The reasoning involved is similar to that in the notorious *Ahhiyawa* question, which turns on the alleged mention of Achaeans in the Hittite cuneiform texts. None of the equations adduced can be said to be above reproach: *Milawanda* = Miletus, *Ahhiyawa* = Achaea, *Alaksandus* = Alexandros and so on.²⁵

Unlike the Hittites, the Greeks had a considerably lower standing in the Bronze Age world. On the periphery of the great empires and further removed by the Aegean Sea, the Greek city-states on the mainland, in Asia Minor, and the islands developed commercial and military alliances amongst themselves. Their archives reflect that insular quality. Like their cuneiform counterparts, the Minoan-Mycenaean tablets covered trade, wars, and slaves captured. Their compilation in Linear B implies that those using and cataloging the tablets read mainly, perhaps only, Greek. At the international level, communication was in Hittite. This leads to the suggestion that the more powerful courts such as Mycenae, Pylos, and Knossos employed Hittite scribes. There is no mention of librarians being brought over, but the scribes may have contributed to the setting up of the archives. Palmer describes the discovery of the "Archives Room" in the palace at Pylos:

It was a narrow chamber some three by six metres in area in the south-eastern corner of the palace. A clay bench ran around the three sides, and the tablets were found on this bench and scattered about on the floor. In all there were 618 pieces. They were in a soggy condition, but after drying out became as hard as the contemporary pottery.²⁶

Compared to Mesopotamian and Anatolian archives, the size of the room and small number of tablets seem paltry. However, the citadel of Pylos was not the capital of an empire and the archive may have sufficed the economy and bureaucracy. Other records may also have been kept on more fragile material. A better find was that made by Evans at Knossos. Palmer continues:

... A whole hoard of inscribed tablets were found in a bath-shaped vessel of terra-cotta. The tablets, some in perfect condition, were arranged in rows. From the fact that the tablets were embedded in charred wood Evans referred that their immediate receptacle had been a wooden box. Finds of such tablets were made in various parts of the Palace. That they had remained undisturbed since the destruction was evident from one set in the Eight Magazine, imperfectly baked, was found in the original order with the totalling tablet at the bottom.²⁷

From this bounty, it was possible to learn more about the tablets. The scribes started with fresh clay, forming narrow palm-leaf pads for drafts and rectangular, ruled pages for the finished document. Extra clay at the end of a "sheet" was cut off and reused. Originally only sun-dried, they were baked in the conflagrations which destroyed the palaces. The Knossos tablets are also invaluable in tracing the evolution of Linear B, via Linear A to hieroglyphics. The language, however, was not Egyptian, but an early form of Greek. Taplin elaborates: "The evidence of Linear B tablets confirms that this is the Greek of the Mycenaeans some 500 years before Homer and on the mainland of Greece."²⁸

From studies of Linear B to date, it is clear that the script was used primarily to record transactions. Most tablets contain complicated ideograms and numeric entries, but meager textual expressions. Constrained by the limits of Linear B, works of literature and religion could not be written down. Instead, a strong oral tradition flourished; literary and liturgical texts were committed to memory and recited. Under the circumstances, it would have been difficult for the Minoan-Mycenaean archives to expand into libraries. With the destruction of the palaces, the preservation of written records ceased. Greece became an oral society and continued to remain so. Indeed, the Homeric epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, endured because they were sung until being set down in writing centuries later.

The fall of the Bronze Age empires during the first millennium B.C.E. also signalled an end of the bureaucratic archives. The mode of writing changed irrevocably. Cuneiform, already on the wane, virtually disappeared. Linear B soon became obsolete. Before libraries could be re-established in Greece, writing had to regain importance.

NOTES

1. E. Richardson, *Some Old Egyptian Librarians* (New York 1911) 13.
2. A. Knapp, *The History and Culture of Ancient Western Asian and Egypt* (Chicago 1988) 269.
3. J. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East* v.1 (Princeton 1958) 234.
4. L. Avrin, *Scribes, Script and Books* (Chicago 1991) 87.
5. J. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries* (Hamden, Conn. 1962) 4.
6. J. Reade, "Archaeology and the Kuyunjik Archives," in K. Veenhof, ed., *Cuneiform Archives and Libraries* (Leiden 1986) 218-19.
7. Avrin (supra n. 4) 71.
8. B. Foster, "Archives and Empire in Sargonic Mesopotamia," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 46-47.
9. S. Parpola, "The Royal Archives of Nineveh," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 225-226.
10. M. Dandamayev, "The Neo-Babylonian Archives," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 273.
11. Dandamayev (supra n. 10) 274.
12. E. Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA 1972) 27.
13. Thompson (supra n. 5) 12.
14. Thompson (supra n. 5) 13.
15. P. Matthiae, "The Archives of the Royal Palace G of Ebla," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 56-62.
16. Posner (supra n. 12) 27.
17. E. Campbell, *The Chronology of the Amarna Letters* (Baltimore 1964) 48.
18. Campbell (supra n. 17) 33. Campbell remarks on the deliberate destruction of the tablets upon discovery: "Budge ... surmises that the diggers willfully broke many of the tablets 'either for the purpose of easy carriage, ... or that the number of men who were to have a share in the profit ... may be increased.'"
19. Campbell (supra n. 17) 48.
20. Campbell (supra n. 17) 49.
21. K. Kitchen, *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs* (Liverpool 1962) 48.

22. H. Otten, "Archive und Bibliotheken in Hattusa," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 184.
Otten's exact list reads: "Historischen Texte die größte Aufmerksamkeit: d.h. Teile der Korrespondenz zwischen Ramses II. und Hattusili III., Abschriften des berühmten Friedensvertrages zwischen beiden Ländern usw."
23. Otten (supra n. 22) 186. "*UMMA LUGAL.GAL* et *UMMA tabarna* sont le début des N^{os} 4 (= Actes de Hattusili I^{er}) et 8 (Chronique du palais, règne de Hattusili I^{er}?)"
24. G. Mauer. "Die Karriere des Schribers Tattamaru, Sohn des Sahurunuwa," in Veenhof (supra n. 6) 191.
25. L. Palmer. *Mycenaeans and Minoans: Aegean Prehistory in the Light of the Linear B Tablets* (London 1961) 88.
26. Palmer (supra n. 25) 45.
27. Palmer (supra n. 25) 48.
28. O. Taplin, "Homer," in J. Boardman et al., eds., *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1986, 1988) 63.

THE GREEK MODEL: CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC LIBRARIES

"Tell me, Euthydemus, am I rightly informed that you have a large collection of books written by the wise men of the past, as they are called?"

"By Zeus, yes, Socrates," answered he, "and I am still adding to it, to make it as complete as possible."

Memorabilia (4:2.8-10)
Xenophon

Writing changed, but never died out in Egypt and the Levant. The latter played a significant role in the development of written Greek. As Murray explains:

Both peoples [the Hebrews and the Greeks] learned the alphabet from the same source, the Phoenicians who invented it; writing came to Greece in the eighth-century BC, yet Greece long remained an oral culture in which men spoke in prose, but composed in song.¹

The introduction of writing in Greece is attributed to Cadmus, a Phoenician prince, with additions by another outsider, Palamedes, first mentioned in the Homeric sagas. As well as Herodotus, Pliny the Elder discusses the Greek alphabet in the *Natural History*:

Cadmus imported an alphabet of 16 letters into Greece from Phoenicia, and that to these Palamedes at the time of the Trojan war added the four characters ΖΨΦΧ, and after him Simonides the lyric poet added another four ΥΞΩΘ, all representing sounds recognized also in the Roman alphabet. Aristotle holds that the primitive alphabet contained 18 letters, and that Ψ and Ζ were added by Epicharmus more probably than Palamedes.²

This was the oldest form of the script of which a few examples survive, mainly on inscriptions on early pottery where labels identify the characters depicted.

Once writing was established, several forms of writing materials emerged. Papyrus was the preferred the medium. Though imported from Egypt, probably from the Greek colonies there, the word for book, *biblion*, was associated with Byblos in Phoenicia from where it was originally introduced into Greece. More is known about papyrus scrolls from

the Hellenistic era than their Classical predecessors. The scroll measured 5 to 10 meters in length with individual sheets 23 to 38 centimeters wide and 20 to 23 centimeters long.

Avrin elaborates: "The average-sized scroll was long enough for writing one play or two or three short books of Homer's works."⁴ A sharpened reed pen, the *kalamos*, dipped in black or sepia ink was used for writing. In Ionia, where sheep and goat skins had long been substituted for papyrus, parchment was standard. Erasable wax tablets were more common for everyday use.

The Homeric epics were set in writing not long after the alphabet was adopted, according to Grant, in ca. 720 B.C.E.³ Also among the seventh-century written works were the hymns of Hesiod. These bear a remarkable resemblance to Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts of an earlier era. The *Works and Days* is a translation of a wisdom text, composed in a Sumerian style, and set in a Hebrew format. The *Theogony*, a hymn of praise to Zeus, evokes the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*. It would be some time, however, before copies of Homer and Hesiod made their way into libraries. In the absence of written factual history, the Homeric myths were given historical value. With myriad versions of the legends, the original sources remained obscure. Even after being written down, since authors were unable to come to a consensus, accounts varied. Memorization was the primary method of learning and continued to remain so well into the fifth century. By this time, works of the sixth-century writers — Sappho, Anaximander, and Thales — were available on scrolls and may already have been in libraries.

A long period of civil wars and foreign invasions ended in the fifth century with the eventual dominance of Athens as the strongest political and military power. The threat of Persian aggression had resulted in a heightened sense of nationalism which Herodotus calls *to hellenikon* — "Greekness" — and Hornblower translates as "shared blood, shared

language, shared religion, and shared customs."⁵ The treasuries dedicated by the various city-states at Delphi symbolized that short-lived unity. The golden age of art and literature may well have been the product of Athenian propaganda to consolidate her supremacy. While impressive monuments on the Acropolis expressed civic pride, great works of literature extolling the city-state and her heritage were equally highly prized.

A well-read and enthusiastic populace ensured a brisk trade in books in Athens. Though publishing was not an organized industry, successful copyists operated workshops that mass-produced best-sellers and classics. Pinner adds, "There must even have been widespread overseas export of books, reaching as far as the Greek colonies on the Black Sea."⁶ Books were fairly inexpensive, but with numerous publications proliferating rapidly, not all could afford to build large private libraries. The need grew for a single centralized collection that housed contemporary works: the odes of Pindar and Simonides, plays by Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides, and the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides.

The Athenians demanded and received a city library. They were also willing to support the enterprise. It is believed the first public library in Athens, established in the mid-sixth century, flourished for several decades. The structure, like many others, was probably destroyed during the sack of Athens by Xerxes in 480 B.C.E. Since there are no remains of this, or any other libraries from the classical era, references in literature spanning several centuries are the only clues to its existence. Writing in the second century C.E., Aulus Gellius describes the evolution of the Athenian public library system:

The tyrant Peisistratus is said to have been the first to establish at Athens a public library of books relating to the liberal arts. Then the Athenians themselves added to this collection with considerable diligence and care; but later Xerxes, when he got possession of Athens and burned the entire city except the citadel [in 480 B.C.E.], removed that whole collection of books

and carried them off to Persia. A long time afterwards, king Seleuccus, who was surnamed Nicanor, had all those books taken back to Athens.⁷

The first documented compilation of Homer took place at this time and is cited in several ancient sources. Aelian notes that after having collected the Homeric poems, Peisistratus brought out the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁸ In a reference to the city of Donussa (mentioned in the *Iliad*), in his *Description of Greece*, Pausanias adds, "When Peisistratus collected the poems of Homer, which were scattered and handed down by tradition, ... either he or one of his colleagues perverted the name through ignorance."⁹ The *De comedia Graeca* (quoted in Platthy) lists the translators, editors, and compilers:

Aside from translating the foreign books, he had the Greek books edited. Those of tragedy by Alexander of Aetolia, comedy by Lycophron, the other poets by Zenodotus of Ephesus and in particular the books of Homer were put together by Epiconcyclus, Onomacritus of Athens, Zopyrus of Heraclea and Orpheus of Croton.¹⁰

Colophons were intended to guarantee the accuracy of the text, but there were few, if any controls on the scribes. Pinner remarks on situation:

Nowhere is any indication found of the payment of authors' fees, nowhere the slightest hint of a copyright protection. From the extensive plagiarism found even among the greatest authors it is evident that the creator of a work had no exclusive right in it.¹¹

Colophons notwithstanding, discrepancies and misappropriations continued to occur. In the fourth century, to counter the influx of a large number of bad editions of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, Lycurgus decreed a "pure copy" be maintained in the public archives of Athens.¹² This non-circulating copy could be read and copied. Accurate copies made directly from the original in the "copyright office" could be placed in other libraries. It appears as though libraries were able to regulate the integrity of their collections to a certain extent, but not enough is known to determine whether librarians instituted rules to prevent unauthorized copying or penalized violators.

Scholars could, and did, make use of the scrolls in public collections. The historian Thucydides was familiar with the works of Homer and Herodotus, sources easily found in the libraries. Polybius mentions the historian Timaeus who did his research on the "manners and customs of the Ligurians, Celts, and Iberians" in Athenian libraries instead of travelling to those lands.¹³ By the end of the fifth century, libraries were an essential department of civic government, taken for granted. While there are passing references to public libraries, few writers emphasize the importance of libraries and librarians to their research. As they do not even complain about them, it is tempting to conjecture that they found most materials easily and the quality of service was exemplary.

Of course, it is possible serious scholars relied less on public libraries by developing private collections and sharing personal resources. Johnson cites a number of prominent bibliophiles:

Euripides, the poet and dramatist, was also a book collector. His plays show that he was well read, and it is assumed that he owned many of the books he used as background for his dramas. Euthydemus is reported as collector of poetry and as the owner of a complete set of Homer's works. Larensis of Athens is supposed to have had the largest private library of the fourth century B.C. and to have had it well arranged and classified. Demosthenes, the orator, had a select library, including many works copied in his own handwriting. Euclid of Megara, the philosopher, was also mentioned, as was Isocrates.¹⁴

Indeed, buying books of earlier writers in quantity became so fashionable that Socrates urged Euthydemus to justify the need for expanding his library. The episode is recounted by Xenophon. When Euthydemus admitted to buying books to complete his collection,

"By Hera," retorted Socrates, "I do admire you for valuing the treasures of wisdom above gold and silver. ... The thoughts of the wise enrich their possessors with virtue."

Now Euthydemus was glad to hear this. ... But Socrates went on to say: "Tell me, Euthydemus, what kind of goodness do you want to get by collecting these books?"¹⁵

Plato and Aristotle were also avid bibliophiles. Expense seems not to have been a consideration for either philosopher, as Gellius found:

The story goes that the philosopher Plato was a man of very slender means, but that nevertheless he bought three books of Philolaus the Pythagorean for ten thousand denarii. ... Aristotle too, according to report bought a very few books of the philosopher Speusippus, after the latter's death, for three Attic talents, a sum equivalent in our money to seventy-two thousand sesterces.¹⁶

According to some accounts, Aristotle owned a thousand books, some of which may have belonged to Plato. However, without contemporaneous figures, the total number of volumes and their cost are debatable: his own work must have formed a considerable portion of the collection. Strabo narrates what happened to it after Aristotle's death.¹⁷ It was left, with his school, to Theophrastus, who had organized Ptolemy's libraries. Neleus inherited from Theophrastus, then bequeathed it entirely to his heirs in Scepsis in Asia Minor. Here, unused and uncared for, the books were, nevertheless, hidden from the Attalid king, Eumenes II, who was developing the Pergamene library. Eventually, around 100 B.C.E., by now badly ruined, they were sold to Apellicon of Teos who restored, recopied, and reissued the texts, but damaged the quality by faulty editing. Following his death around 84 B.C.E., Sulla had them moved to his personal library in Rome where they were copied yet again, with even more errors than before.

Aristotle's influence on the spread of libraries is considerable. He instilled in his pupil, Alexander of Macedon, an abiding love of books. Plutarch:

He [Alexander] was also by nature a lover of learning and lover of reading. And since he thought and called the *Iliad* a viaticum of the military art, he took with him Aristotle's recension of the poem, ... and always kept it lying with his dagger under his pillow, as Onesicritus informs us; and when he could find no other books in the interior of Asia, he ordered Harpalus to send him some. So Harpalus sent him the books of Philistus, a great many of the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus, and the dithyrambic poems of Telestus and Philoxenus.¹⁸

During his campaigns, Alexander instituted administrative archives at various sites in the lands he conquered. Alexander's empire did not survive long after his death in 323 B.C.E.: the lands were soon carved into individual kingdoms by his generals. The archives and book collections survived the collapse. In the following centuries, they were developed into full-scale libraries, organized and operated by trained personnel. The greatest institutions of the Hellenic world belong to this age.

Despite continuous warfare to gain ultimate political supremacy, the rulers also endeavored to outdo each other in the patronage of the arts. The promotion of libraries was an important factor in their bid for cultural aggrandizement. Antigonos Gonatus of Macedonia set up a library at Pella around 250 B.C.E. He was followed some years later by the Seleucid king, Antiochus the Great, who opened his to scholars in Antioch.¹⁹ The first librarians of these institutions were not so much librarians as scholars. Thompson, citing the Byzantine historian, Suidas, notes that Antiochus invited the grammarian Euphorion to run his library while Cratus of Malus, a grammarian, and Athenodorus of Tarsus also headed the Pergamene library.²⁰

At its peak, the library of Pergamon was one of the finest in Asia Minor. Founded by Attalos I (241-197 B.C.E.), his son, Eumenes II (197-159 B.C.E.), embarked on an active enlargement venture. This included a new building in the precinct of the temple of Athena. Jackson: "The Pergamene Library may reasonably be credited with a colonnaded area of some 70 by 10 yards [ca. 64 x 9 meters] housing possibly 160,000 rolls."²¹ The method by which materials were collected were high-handed at best and tyrannical at worst. Works were seized from writers, collectors, and travelers. The acquisitive drive of the Ptolemies and Attalids resulted in a large number of incorrect copies and faked titles flooding the market, a circumstance Galen regretted.²¹ Competition between Ptolemy and

Eumenes II was fierce. Vitruvius: "Then Ptolemy, moved by unbounded jealousy and avaricious desire, strove with no less industry to establish a library at Alexandria after the same fashion."²³ Eumenes was accused of trying to lure a librarian from Alexandria to Pergamon. Ptolemy, according to Pliny (who cites Varro), countered by banning the export of papyrus. This resulted in the invention of parchment in Pergamon — a glib, but implausible explanation.²⁴

Skins and leather were used commonly in Asia Minor, where papyrus, an imported product, must have been expensive. Parchment was one of Pergamon's many exports. The hide brought from the Black Sea area was refined and treated, then shipped out as *pergamena* or *charta pergamena*. There is no record, archaeological or literary, that the bulk of the Pergamene collection consisted of parchment codices. In fact, Johnson contends, "It is most probable that the great majority of the rolls in the library at Pergamum were of papyrus."²⁵ Johnson may have a point: Plutarch, struck by the size of the collection, would also have remarked on the unusual material of the books when he noted that Mark Antony "bestowed upon [Cleopatra] the libraries from Pergamum in which there were two hundred thousand volumes."²⁶ This event, which took place circa 30 B.C.E., signalled the end of Pergamene library. What Eumenes had so jealously guarded from the Ptolemies finally ended up in Alexandria.

In 306 B.C.E., Ptolemy son of Lagus, one of Alexander's generals and a close friend, pronounced himself king of Egypt with his capital at the newly founded city of Alexandria. Here, he embarked on an ambitious building project. One of the magnificent public structures was the most renowned of the Hellenistic libraries. In 290, in the district known as the Brucheion, Ptolemy I Soter, the first of a dynasty of scholar-rulers, founded the Museion.

Libraries had long been a part of Egyptian temple and palace complexes when the Museion was established. Ptolemy's temple of the muses was based on two Athenian models — Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum — and essentially an Hellenistic construction. Robin Fox offers a description of the library:

The royal library was probably attached to the colonnades and common room of the museum and served more as a vast arsenal of books than as a separate set of reading rooms. Nearly half a million book-rolls are alleged to have been stored inside while another 42,000 are said to have lived in a second library attached to the temple of Serapis.²⁷

Strabo includes details of its appearance in his day: "The museum is also a part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk, an Exedra with seats, and a large house, in which is the common mess-hall of the men of learning who share the Museum."²⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, writing in the fourth century C.E., was awestruck by Alexandria:

There are besides in the city, temples pompous with lofty roofs, conspicuous among them the Serapeum, which, though feeble words merely belittle it, yet is so adorned with extensive columned halls, with almost breathing statues, and a great number of other works of art, that next to the Capitolium, ... the whole world beholds nothing more magnificent. In this were invaluable libraries, and the unanimous testimony of ancient records declares that 700,000 books, brought together by the unremitting energy of the Ptolemaic kings, were burned in the Alexandrine war, when this city was sacked under the dictator Caesar.²⁹

The library outgrew the Museion by the middle of the third century. Ptolemy II Philadelphus or his son, Euergetes, rebuilt the Serapeion to augment the Museion.³⁰ Euergetes also increased the holdings. Like that of his contemporary from Pergamon, his method was ruthless and absolute. Books brought in by foreigners were seized and copied. The copies were then returned to the owners while the originals were placed in the library. As Thompson adds, his quest for original editions reached beyond Alexandria:

From Athens Ptolemy borrowed the official state copies of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, making a deposit of fifteen talents thereon, which he preferred to forfeit rather than to return the originals, although he sent back handsome copies of them.³¹

Works were imported from every part of Magna Graecia and Asia. As well as Greek texts, there were also translations of Hebrew manuscripts, including one of the Septuagint. It is impossible to state with any degree of accuracy exactly how many books were held in the combined collection with no surviving documents from the Ptolemaic period itself and wildly differing numbers in the other sources, most of which date to the Roman period. In any case, the development of the libraries did not cease with the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Well into the Roman imperial era, the emperor Claudius contributed an annex, named after him, to house his works. Suetonius provides a glimpse into the activities in the libraries during the first century C.E.: "It was provided that in the one his Etruscan History should be read each year from beginning to end, and in the other his Carthaginian, by various readers in turn, in the manner of public recitations."³²

Such a practice occurred during the Hellenistic period as well. More is known about the scholars who were in charge of the libraries. Appointed by the king, the librarians were poets, grammarians, and philosophers. As much as their diverse academic backgrounds, their ethnicity also epitomized the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Alexandria. El-Abbadi provides the names of some, based on partial lists in the text of the Byzantine scholar Ioannis Tzetzes and an Oxyrhyncus papyrus:

Zenodotus	c. 285-c.270 B.C.
Apollonius Rhodius	c. 270-245 B.C.
Eratosthenes	245-204/1 B.C.
Aristophanes	204/1-189/6 B.C.
Apollonius Eidograph	189/6-175 B.C.
Aristarchus	175-145 B.C.
Kydas (one of the Spearmen)	145-116 (?) B.C.

Two important names are conspicuously missing from the list, those of Demetrius and Callimachus. ... The position of the former is not difficult to explain. The list of names started with the reign of Philadelphus, who may have initiated the official post of chief librarian.³³

Although he fell foul of Philadelphus, Demetrios of Phaleron was instrumental in the establishment of the academy under the aegis of Soter. He may have been responsible for setting up the core of the collection, acquired earlier in Greece and its subsequent expansion. The rhetorician is usually listed as the first "librarian" of the Museion, though he did not hold that designation. Josephus, citing the Letter of Aristeas, comments on his role in the growth of the library:

Demetrius of Phalerum, who was in charge of the king's library, was anxious to collect, if he could, all the books in the inhabited world, and, if he heard of, or saw, any book worthy of study, he would buy it; and so he endeavoured to meet the wishes of the king, for he was very much devoted to the art of book-collecting. Now, when Ptolemy once asked him how many thousands of books he had already gathered together, he replied that the present number was about two hundred thousand but that within a short time he would assemble some five hundred thousand.³⁴

Demetrios was eventually replaced by Zenodotus of Ephesos on whom was conferred the title of *bibliophylax*. Blum:

The *bibliophylax*, the keeper of the royal collection of books (literally the "guardian of books") was responsible for the maintenance and utilization of the collection. On the other hand, there is no evidence that any of the Alexandrian librarians was concerned about acquisitions or that he had funds at this disposal for that purpose.³⁵

Regardless of the authority of the *bibliophylax*, Zenodotus saw the libraries increase. The collection enhancement program never stopped. By the time of his successor, Kallimachos of Kyrene, the libraries had grown large enough to require a system of organization.

Kallimachos, a poet and grammarian, was highly respected as a scholar. He was also one of the pioneers of the library profession. His main legacy to the Alexandrian libraries was a classification scheme which enabled easy access to the collection: the *Pinakes*. This extensive work, Blum elucidates, was "a repertory of the works of Greek literature held by the library with data on their authors, unique, the more so since the library

had copies of almost all works that still existed at that time."³⁶ Since the Ptolemies had instituted an early form of the right of deposit, this catalog was, in a sense, much like a national library catalog today. Mention in later writers indicate that it was probably completed and published by his students and became the norm for all library catalogs of the Hellenistic world. It may have been used as a teaching tool by other librarians while scholars must have found it extremely useful.

Other Alexandrian librarians also made significant contributions to the profession,³⁷ though Apollonios Rhodios is better known as the author of the *Argonautika*. The scientist Eratosthenes attempted to create an ordered chronology. Aristophanes of Byzantium was a grammarian, lexicographer, and philologist who introduced standard punctuation to improve the quality of the texts reproduced in the library. Vitruvius relates the episode which led to his appointment. Asked to judge a competition held to determine the finest poet in Alexandria, he was able to prove that the poets approved by the audience had, in fact, plagiarized from works in the library.³⁸ While they may have lacked library-related qualifications, the multi-disciplinary backgrounds of these scholar-librarians helped shape the requirements of the profession.

The Athenians may have dismissed their libraries as commonplace civic monuments and the keepers as public employees. Living in a democracy, they could afford to do so. The Hellenistic monarchs, while more respectful, were also aware of the power of intellectuals. Though there does not appear to have been any censorship in the materials collected for the libraries — indeed, the Ptolemies were quite indiscriminate in their acquisitions — the scholars at the Museion were not exempt from regal wrath aroused by their writings against the reigning or future king. To prevent conspiracy from starting in the libraries, guards were sometimes posted in the Museion, even placed in charge of the

library. This did not augur well for the quality of new purchases, but ensured that the books were safe from vandalism during periods of unrest.

The first instance of the Museion suffering from war was in 48 B.C.E. when 400,000 volumes were destroyed by the fires set by Caesar's soldiers. Restored in part by the addition of the Pergamene collection, the libraries continued to flourish throughout the Roman domination: the Museion till 272 C.E., the Serapeion till 391. That neither Caesar nor Augustus took the collections to Rome as triumphal booty is remarkable. Instead, they took home the concept of endowing libraries. Up to this time in Rome, a large library made available to the intellectuals of the city by the generous bequest of a benevolent ruler was unusual. Libraries had long been considered the personal property of the winners, the wealthy, and the wise.

NOTES

1. O. Murray, "Greek Historians," in J. Boardman et al., eds., *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1986, 1988) 181.
2. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 7:56.192. Pliny drew on Herodotus: "These Phoenicians who came with Cadmus brought into Hellas the alphabet, which had hitherto been unknown ... to the Greeks: and presently as time went on the sound and form of the letters were changed. Herod. 5.59.
3. M. Grant, *The Ancient Mediterranean* (New York 1969) 150.
4. L. Avrin, *Scribes, Script and Books* (Chicago 1991) 145.
5. S. Hornblower, "Greece: the History of the Classical Period," in J. Boardman et al., eds., *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1986, 1988) 121.
6. H. Pinner, *The World of Books in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 1958) 23.
7. Gell. 7:17.1-2.
8. Ael. 13:14.
9. Paus. 7:26.13. Men from Donussa accompanied Agamemnon to Troy.
10. J. Platthy, *Sources on the Earliest Greek Libraries* (Amsterdam 1968) 107.
11. Pinner (supra n. 6) 25.
12. J. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries* (Hamden, Conn. 1962) 21.
13. Polyb. 12:28. Polybius himself used the libraries for his research (12:28), as did Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 1:7.2.) and Diodorus Siculus (1:4.1-4).
14. E. Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Metuchen, NJ 1970) 53.
15. Xen., *Mem.* 4:2.8-10. This view is also echoed by the Stoics in the Roman imperial era.
16. Gell. (supra n. 7) 3:17.1-3.
17. Strab. 13:1.54.
18. Plut. *Alexander* 8:2-3. Caesar, who revered Alexander, (and whose biography is paired with Alexander's in the *Lives*) was also a bibliophile who carried books on his campaigns.
19. Johnson (supra n. 14) 60.

20. Thompson (supra n. 12) 21 and Johnson (supra n. 14) 61. There is some doubt as to whether Aristophanes of Byzantium, included in Thompson's account, served as the Pergamene librarian: he was the director of the Alexandrian collection.
21. S. Jackson, *Libraries and Librarianship in the West: A Brief History* (New York 1974) 19.
22. Galen. *Nat. Fac.* 1:127, 2:128.
23. Vitr. 7.4.
24. Plin. (supra n. 2) 13:70.
25. Johnson (supra n. 14) 61.
26. Plut. *Antony* 58.5.
27. R. Fox, "Hellenistic Culture and Literature," in J. Boardman et al., eds., *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1986, 1988) 335.
28. Strab. (supra n. 17) 17:1.8.
29. Amm. Marc. 22:16.12-13. Ammianus exaggerates the damage done by Caesar's forces — about 400,000 volumes were destroyed. - translator's note.
30. The confusion over the actual builder of the Serapeion dates to medieval historians who credited Philadelphus with the structure and repeated by many historians. El-Abbadi differs: "The evidence is conclusive as the foundation plaques discovered during the excavations on the site in 1943/44, clearly bear the name of Ptolemy III (246-221 B.C.)" M. El-Abbadi, *The life and fate of the ancient library of Alexandria* (Paris 1990) 91.
31. J. Thompson, *Ancient Libraries* (Hamden, Conn. 1962) 23.
32. Suet. *Claud.* 42:2.
33. El-Abbadi (supra n. 30) 93-94.
34. Jos. *Jud. Ant.* 12:12-13.
35. R. Blum, *Kallimachos* (Madison 1991) 102.
36. Blum (supra n. 34) 182.
37. Jackson (supra n. 21) 15-16.
38. Vitr. 7.5-7.

BIBLIOTHECA ET DOMUS:
PRIVATE LIBRARIES OF THE ROMAN ELITE

I hope he will take more pleasure in his library than in all the
 other appointments of his country-house.

De Finibus (3:2.8)
 Cicero

The earliest libraries in Rome can be traced to the second century B.C.E. The Etruscan influence on Roman libraries appears to be minimal. It was only as Greek ideals began to infiltrate Roman culture that educated patricians began to develop personal collections. There was one significant difference in their acquisition process from that of the Athenians or the Hellenistic kings. These libraries were obtained, not as treasured purchases or confiscated imports, but as spoils of war. The first Roman book collector was a triumphant general.

In 168 B.C.E., Lucius Aemilius Paullus defeated King Perseus of Macedon at Pydna. With this victory Rome attained control of the Hellenistic world and succumbed to Hellenistic taste.¹ Plutarch describes the three days of festivities of the triumph accorded to Paullus. Exhibited on the first day, in addition to precious metals, ceremonial objects, and arms, were "captured statues, paintings, and colossal figures, which were carried on two hundred and fifty chariots."² While almost everything else was sent to the state treasury, the Macedonian library Paullus appropriated as his only share of the booty.

... Men praised his freedom of spirit and his greatness of soul; for he would not consent even to look upon the quantities of silver and the quantities of gold that were gathered together from the royal treasures, but handed them over to the quaestors for the public chest. It was only the books of the king that he allowed his sons, who were devoted to learning, to choose out for themselves....³

A scholar in his own right, Paullus had ensured that his sons received their education from Greek grammarians, rhetoricians, philosophers, and artists, supervising their studies and exercises himself as often as possible.⁴ Soon after the triumph, the historian Polybius emigrated to Rome. It is conceivable that he continued his research in the Aemilian library: though his was a private collection, Paullus welcomed and encouraged scholars. Johnson notes the influence of the Pergamene librarian, Cratus of Malus, who, while envoy to the Senate, "lectured and taught and [possibly] aroused interest in the collection of books and also in architecture."⁵

Following the precedent set by Paullus, other conquerors brought back books, if not entire libraries. Fedeli mentions the books on agriculture by Mago taken from Carthage; the rest, in Phoenician, proved too difficult to use and were given to other African kings.⁶ As had Paullus, later victorious generals also brought back works of art.

Cornelius Sulla acquired the library of Apellicon of Teos in 84 B.C.E. after sacking Athens in 86. This was the library of Aristotle and Theophrastus which Apellicon had acquired around 100.⁷ Sulla placed the books in his house in Rome. There is some disagreement in the ancient sources as to who exactly was in charge of the library. According to Plutarch, "Tyrannion the grammarian arranged most of the works in it, and Andronicus the Rhodian was furnished by him with copies of them, and published them and drew up the lists now current."⁸ Strabo contends Tyrannion was able to use the collection "by paying court to the librarian."⁹ Book dealers and their copyists, would have had to resort to such means: this was a private library and the librarian was responsible for copies. Sulla gave his friends and fellow-Aristotelians free and easy access to the books. His son, Faustus, who inherited the library, continued the tradition in his house at Cumae where Cicero used it in 55.

A decade earlier, in 66, Lucius Licinius Lucullus had appropriated the vast library of Mithridates after defeating the King of Pontus. Known for his extravagance and wealth, most often associated with magnificent banquets, Lucullus also saw himself as a patron of the arts. Plutarch comments on his lavish hospitality:

Lucullus also used his wealth wantonly, as though it were in very truth a Barbarian prisoner-of-war. But what he did in the establishment of a library deserves warm praise. He got together many books, and they were well written, and his use of them was more honourable to him than his acquisition of them. His libraries were thrown open to all, and the cloisters surrounding them, and the study-rooms, were accessible without restriction to the Greeks, who constantly repaired thither as to a hostelry of the Muses.¹⁰

A liberal Epicurean and follower of the Old Academy led by Antiochus of Ascalon, he also collected the works of other philosophers. Bequeathed to his son, the library, housed at his villa in Tusculum, was used heavily by his friends — perhaps more than by the younger Lucullus himself, prompting Cicero to comment to Cato that "it will soon be time for our friend Lucullus to make acquaintance of this fine collection."¹¹ Both statesmen were undoubtedly familiar with it. Cicero describes the meeting with Cato:

I was down at my place at Tusculum, and wanted to consult some books from the library of the young Lucullus; so I went to his country-house as I was in the habit of doing, to help myself to the volumes I needed. On my arrival, seated in the library I found Marcus Cato; I had not known he was there. He was surrounded by piles of books on Stoicism. ... When I found him taking a complete holiday, with a vast supply of books at command, he had the air of indulging in a literary debauch, if the term may be applied to so honourable an occupation.¹²

Cato in all likelihood had a large library of his own, as did Marcus Terentius Varro, who wrote extensively on the arts. Given Cicero's interest and involvement in diverse disciplines, he needed immediate access to original references. A well-stocked and organized library, run by trained personnel, made it easier for him to produce an immense corpora of literature ranging from philosophy to law and even rhetoric. His letter to Titus

Pomponius Atticus, written from Antium in the spring of 56, sheds light on how a private library was staffed:

You will be surprised at Tyrannio's excellent arrangement in my library. What is left of it is much better than I expected: still I should be glad if you would send me two of your library slaves to Tyrannio to employ to glue pages together and assist in general, and would tell them to get some bits of parchment to make title-pieces, which I think you Greeks call "syllibi."¹³

There was no dearth of copyists in Rome and not all were necessarily good. Cicero could probably depend on the accuracy of the slaves sent by Atticus. A bibliophile and author, Atticus also operated a publishing house and counted Cicero and Varro among his regular clients. Putnam:

Atticus brought to Rome skilled *librarii* from Athens, and gave personal attention to the training of young slaves for his staff of copyists. ... It is in order to bear in mind that with Atticus publishing, while probably carried on with good business methods, was rather a high-minded diversion than a money-making occupation.¹⁴

In such an organization, quality rather than quantity would have been more important. The manuscripts must have been masterpieces of late-Republican book manufacture.

At this time, the papyrus scroll was the primary format of the book. The production of scrolls reached a peak when the annexation of Egypt resulted in the Roman control of the papyrus trade. Avrin elaborates on the kinds of papyrus used in Rome:

Pliny and other Roman writers noted the various grades of papyrus available, which were named according to their quality, strength, size, and whiteness. There were ten grades in all, from *chartae regiae*, the best (later called *Augustus*) to second-best *Livia*, down to the coarse *emporetica* — merchants' papyrus, used as wrapping paper. Each grade also had a specific width for the individual sheet, measured in digits (about 4 cm); the best was thirteen digits, the cheapest, six digits.¹⁵

Depending on the quality, papyrus was expected to last between two and three centuries. None from Rome survives today. Papyri from this period come from Egypt and the Campanian towns buried in the 79 C.E. eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.

Other writing surfaces included linen and wax. Except for the *libri lintei*, the Linen Books containing the lists of magistrates, kept in the temple of Juno Moneta,¹⁶ linen was usually used for personal documents. Since papyrus scrolls outnumber linen books even in private libraries, it is safe to assume that they were not intended for long-term retention. Wax tablets, inscribed with metal styli, were popular since the writing could be erased and the surface reused. They could be expanded with hinges into multiple-paged "books": diptychs, triptychs, and polyptychs have been discovered and are represented in art, most often in portraits. These forms were also practical for vellum and parchment codices. Many of the terms associated with books today come from the papyrus scroll. "Recto" referred to the inner side of the scroll which was ruled for writing; today it means the right-hand side page. The back, the "verso" (overleaf in the modern book) was not generally used for writing. While paper is related to papyrus, the Latin for book, *liber*, comes from *arborum libris*, the inner bark of a tree. No book of wood or bark is extant from this period and it is improbable they were common during the late Republic. Avrin elucidates:

Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, 13:21) said that, before papyrus, people used to write on tree barks, *arborum libris*. Cicero and Vergil both used *liber* with this meaning; other writers used it for "treatise" or a "book-in-series." *Liber* was the basis of the Latin words for "bookseller" and "scribe" in republican days, then for the "scribe" alone, *librarius*, whether slave or freedman. Cicero called the bookcase *librarium*. Eventually *liber* became ... the English "library."¹⁷

Liber, however, did not influence the Latin for library: the retail connotation during the Republic may have been considered unfit to be applied a private collection. *Bibliotheca* is derived from the Greek βιβλιοθηκην, more palatable to the philhelene intelligentsia.

The scholars of Cicero's generation had to develop personal collections since public libraries had not as yet been instituted. Buying books to develop an image of cultured sophistication became a fad in the following centuries. Satirists mocked the *nouveau-riche*

who reduced the library to a status symbol, an exhibit of wealth. Few employed librarians to organize the collections or to assist with research. Literary references hint at collecting habits. Trimalchio boasts, "And do not imagine that I despise learning. I have got two libraries, one Greek and one Latin."¹⁸ The Stoic philosopher Seneca denounces collecting books merely for the sake of owning a large collection: "What is the use of possessing numberless books and libraries, whose titles their owner can hardly read through a lifetime?"¹⁹ Such comments had little effect. Lucian's scathing diatribe *The Ignorant Book-Collector*, was written during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, circa 170 C.E., and in the third century C.E., Quintus Serenus Sammonicus left 62,000 scrolls to emperor Gordian II.²⁰

Dilettantes were not the only ones who revelled in their libraries, as indicated by Cicero's numerous references to scholarly libraries. In addition to sponsoring public libraries, the emperors also maintained private collections, run by a librarian, who was also responsible for the copying of materials in the library. Julius Caesar preserved his accounts of war, letters, and speeches, as well as earlier writings from his boyhood and youth, "but Augustus forbade the publication of all these minor works in a ... letter sent to Pompeius Macer, whom he had selected to set his libraries in order."²¹ Tiberius' villa on Capri would have had Greek and Latin libraries for "he was greatly devoted to liberal studies in both languages."²² Encouraged by Livy, Claudius wrote multi-volume tomes on Roman, Etruscan, and Carthaginian history. He probably had the finest imperial research collection containing accurate sources. Suetonius: "He began his history with the death of the dictator Caesar, but passed to a later period and took a fresh start at the end of the civil war, realising that he was not allowed to give a frank or true account of earlier times."²³ Nero probably received much help to indulge in his proclivity for Greek drama from his Greek secretary, Epaphroditus, who is said to have possessed 30,000 rolls. Hadrian's

Greek and Latin libraries at his villas in Tivoli and Antium were located in his private quarters, probably for his exclusive use.

Suetonius may not have owned an extensive library: as librarian and secretary to Hadrian, he had unlimited access to the imperial libraries, vital for his research on the lives of the emperors. His contemporary, Pliny the Younger, also had a large number of books. He may have inherited many from his uncle who could hardly have published his enormous *Natural History* without access to a vast collection and some assistance from trained researchers. Pliny's involvement with libraries, their collections and decoration, went beyond his own. In a letter to Caninius Rufus, he writes of the death of Silius Italicus, and unlike Seneca and Lucian, values the late bibliophile:

He had several villas in the same districts, and the last purchase was always the chief favourite, to the neglect of the rest. They were all furnished with large collections of books, statues and portraits, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored; above all the portrait of Vergil....²⁴

Writing to Vibius Severus on behalf of Herennius Severus, he requests copies of the portraits of Cornelius Nepos and Titus Catus to be placed in Herennius' library.²⁵

Like Varro's, Pliny's library is known only from accounts in literature. Nothing remains of the villas of Lucullus and Cicero. Claudius' collection has long since disappeared, as have his works. Hadrian's villa lies in ruins. By a strange twist of fate, the only Roman library found, complete with scrolls and furniture, was preserved by a catastrophic destruction. Buried under 20 to 25 meters of basaltic lava, the result of pyroclastic flows from the 79 and 1631 eruptions of Mt. Vesuvius, the Villa dei Papyri at Herculaneum is the sole example of a private library. Ironically, it was by no means the most impressive in appearance or the best in terms of collections. Indeed, as Pinner observes, "This little library cannot be taken as a typical example of the Roman luxury-

libraries which were, on the contrary, not a whit behind the public libraries in magnificence."²⁶ Considering the grandeur of the villa itself, one can only imagine what the "luxury-libraries" were like. The Villa dei Papyri tells much about its owner's taste in literature, philosophy, and art.

Due in part to the haphazard excavation, a certain amount of controversy surrounded the identification of the ownership. The owner of the villa had to be a wealthy aristocrat: scholars are agreed that the villa could not have belonged to the philosopher Philodemus whose works are predominant in the library. In the late 19th century, led by Mommsen and Mau, the German school rejected Comparetti's contention that the villa belonged to Julius Caesar's father-in-law, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caseonius, Consul in 58 B.C.E. and a *duovir* of Capua. Comparetti came to this conclusion based on Cicero's strongly-worded criticism of Piso, the latter's friendship with Philodemus, and the substantial archaeological remains.²⁷ In 1940, Herbert Bloch was able to link inscriptions bearing Piso's name found in Samothrace and his interest in the Orient to the sculptures and papyri from Herculaneum and suggest that Comparetti's identification may well be valid.²⁸ Since Herculaneum was a popular resort among the wealthy patricians of the first century B.C.E., and given Piso's activities in both Greece and Campania, it is entirely possible that he sought to create his version of a temple of the Muses, complete with resident philosopher, at his sea-side estate.

The sprawling complex measured 33,465 (245 x 137) meters.²⁹ Grant gives a succinct image based on the plans drawn by the Swiss engineer-excavator, Karl Weber:

The original house itself was a low building with a small atrium — hardly more than an entrance hall — and a large peristyle flanked by a *tablinum* commanding a wide view. But beyond the *tablinum* the people who owned the villa in the first century BC added another huge, oblong, colonnaded terrace-park, extending to the north-west. It contained a large pool and

terminated, just above the sea, in a round tower or belvedere, decorated with a sumptuous marble pavement. Below lay a beach with private harbour and boat-houses and this was the point now chosen for the main entrance, which was marked by an impressive columned portico.³⁰

The living quarters, clustered around porticoes and courtyards off the peristyle, included the two rooms that made up the library: one with a marble floor with another adjoining it.

According to Vitruvius:

Private rooms and libraries should look to the east, for their purpose demands the morning light. Further, the books in libraries will not decay. For in apartments which look to the south and west, books are damaged by the bookworm and damp, which are caused by the moist winds on their approach, and they make the papyrus rolls mouldy by diffusing moist air.³¹

According to Weber's plan, the library faced the southwest, the worst direction possible; a portico wall provided some protection against the sea air. The papyrus scrolls were stored in cupboards and a *librarium* in the smaller of the two rooms. Here, then, was "the precious library of rolled and carbonized papyri placed inside wooden *capsae*, some of them on ordinary wooden shelves around the walls and some on the two sides of a set of shelves in the middle of the room."³² The more elegant apartment was in all likelihood the study. Furnishings would have included tables, either round or rectangular, in bronze or marble, wooden couches with bronze fittings and silver inlay, and bronze lamp-stands in organic forms. The wooden cabinets, now completely carbonized, may once have been closed by double doors and decorated with architectural motifs: pedimented tops and flanking colonnettes.³³ A bronze brazier supported by ithyphallic satyrs was also found in the villa and may have been used to warm the reading room.

It is possible, too, that the scrolls were read outdoors in the extensive gardens and in the belvedere, amidst the sculptures, of which eighty-seven have been excavated. The fact that the quality of the works ranges from excellent reproductions of Greek masterpieces — the head of the Doryphoros by Polikleitos (on a herm) and the Athena Promachos to

name only two — to rather ordinary workshop copies seems to indicate that aesthetic purity was not of paramount importance. Piso's taste for Hellenistic culture is more pronounced. Several of the portrait busts have been identified as those of the early Hellenistic dynasts, Demetrios Poliorketes, Seleuccus Nicator, and Ptolemy Philadelphos.³⁴ Others include Demosthenes, Epicurius, Hemarchos, and Zeno of Sidon, the teacher of Philodemus.

While the majority of the papyri are the works of Philodemus, other philosophers — Epicurius, Demetrius, Polystratos, Colote, Crissipos, and Carniscos — are also listed in Emidio Martini's exhaustive catalog (in *La villa Ercolanese*) of the 1806 papyri discovered, opened, and deciphered as of 1883. Martini records the measurements, the language of the text, and the content (if known) and condition of each scroll. Inevitably, a large number were destroyed by inexperienced handling. Those eventually unrolled were copied by Paderni. He was succeeded by Father Antonio Piaggi of the Vatican Library who created a mechanism which opened the scrolls very gradually, thereby preventing further damage to the fragile and brittle papyrus. The ink, though of excellent quality, tends to vanish when exposed to light, forcing decoders to rely on Paderni's copies. (Though a good draughtsman, Paderni had little knowledge of Greek.) Of the over 1800 papyri found, only thirty are in Latin. This could mean either that a separate Latin room existed, but was not discovered during the 18th-century excavations or there were indeed no other Latin works in Piso's collection. It is a pity that no copies of his son-in-law's works have survived.

Caesar had a villa in nearby Baiae and was a frequent visitor. He may have been influenced by Piso's patronage of Philodemus and his admiration of the Hellenistic tradition. Impressed by the Ptolemaic sponsorship of libraries for the erudite of Alexandria, and ever ambitious, Caesar was the first to propose similar libraries in Rome.

NOTES

1. Gruen elaborates on the impact of hellenism on Roman society: "Romans drew a firm line between private predilection and official demeanor. They did not confuse philhellenism (or antihellenism for that matter) with state policy." Paraphrasing Livy (45:29.3), he continues, "When L. Aemilius Paullus announced the terms of the *senatus consultum* at Amphipolis after the conclusion of the Third Macedonian War, he delivered the address in Latin, although his Greek was fully up to the occasion. He then had the message repeated in Greek translation—but not by himself. He could converse freely with Perseus in Greek, but in official capacity as Roman proconsul and *imperator* only Latin was appropriate. E. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley 1984) 267.
2. Plut. *Aem.* 32-34.
3. Plut. (supra n. 2) 28:6.
4. Plut. (supra n. 2) 6:4-5.
5. E. Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Metuchen, NJ 1970) 69.
6. P. Fedeli, "Biblioteche private e pubbliche a Roma e nel mondo romano," in G. Cavallo, ed., *Le biblioteche nel mondo antico e medievale* (Rome 1988) 32.
7. v. ch. 2 for Aristotle's library.
8. Plut. *Sul.* 26:1-2.
9. Strab. 13:1.54-55. If correct, this may have been Tyrannion's initial *entrée* into the library. Plutarch's statement that he was in fact a librarian is substantiated by Cicero. (infra n. 13)
10. Plut. *Luc.* 42:1.
11. Cic. *De Fin.* 3:2.8.
12. Cic. (supra n. 11) 3:2.7.
13. Cic. *Ad Att.* 4:4a. The reference to Tyrannion's having catalogued the collection indicates that the grammarian/librarian may well have been hired on the basis of his experience in Sulla's library.
14. G. Putnam, *Authors and their Public in Ancient Times* (New York 1896) 186, 187. Atticus was, in fact, a banker and well able to afford a library of 20,000 books.
15. L. Avrin, *Scribes Script and Books* (Chicago 1991) 164.

16. Livy 4:7.12, 4:23.3. Despite his references to the great Linen Books, Livy does not appear to have consulted them as his primary sources: rather he mentions Licinius Macer citing them as an authoritative source.
17. Avrin (supra n. 15) 165.
18. Petron. *Satyricon* "Cena Trimalchionis" 48.
19. Seneca, *Dial. "De Tranquillitate Animi"* 9:9.4.
20. *Script. Hist. Gord.* 28:2
21. Suet. *Caes.* 56:7.
22. Suet. *Tib.* 70.
23. Suet. *Claud.* 41.
24. Plin. *Epist.* 3:7. Italicus, made a consul by Nero, was held in esteem by his peers.
25. Plin. (supra n. 24) 4:28.
26. H. Pinner, *The World of Books in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 1958) 58.
27. D. Comparetti, *La Villa Ercolanese dei Pisoni, i suoi Monumenti e la sua Biblioteca* (Turin 1883) 6. "Le lunghe parole che nella Pisoniana si riferiscono a Filodemo, ei dicono nel mondo più aperto e sicure questo ricco, potente epicureo, amico intimo e protettore di Filodemo fu L. Calpurnio Pisone Cesonino, il suocere di Giulio Cesare e l'avversario di Cicerone." Cicero does not mention having visited Piso's villa; a first-hand impression would have been invaluable! Cic. *In Pisonem*.
28. H. Bloch, "L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus in Samothrace and Herculaneum," *AJA* 44 (1940) 485-493.
29. M. Grant, *Cities of Vesuvius: Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Harmondsworth 1971) 137.
30. Grant (supra n. 29) 137. Were it not for Weber's detailed notes, records, and plans, virtually nothing would be known about the Villa dei Papyri today: the "excavation" consisted of tunnelling through the site for treasures. The site was abandoned and the tunnels refilled with debris when the Bourbon monarch(s) lost interest. A large portion of the villa still remains unexcavated.
31. Vit. 6:4.2.
32. A. Maiuri, *Herculaneum and the Villa of the Papyri* (Novara 1962) 39.
33. R. Ling, "The Arts of Living," in J. Boardman, et al., eds., *The Roman World* (Oxford 1988) 321-322.
34. G. Sauron, "Templa Serena," in G. Macchiaroli, ed., *La Villa dei Papiri. Cronache ercolanesi*, suppl. 2. (Naples 1983) 70.

IMPERIAL MUNIFICENCE: THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF ROME

I built ... the temple of Apollo on the Palatine with its
porticoes....

Res Gestae Divi Augusti (4:19)

Upon assuming the dictatorship, Julius Caesar embarked on a number of public works in Rome: temples, water-works, the basilica Julia in the Forum Romanum, and a new forum with a temple to Venus Genetrix. He also intended "to open to the public the greatest possible libraries of Greek and Latin books, assigning to Marcus Varro the charge of procuring and classifying them."¹ Varro was eminently suited for this task, having written a three-volume text on libraries, *de Bibliothecis*. Unfortunately, this project never came to fruition, Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C.E. having terminated its implementation.

Five years later, with spoils from the successful Illyrian campaign, Gaius Asinius Pollio restored the Atrium Libertatis.² Here he established Rome's first public library. Greek and Latin works were housed in separate buildings. Not only did he supply the books, Pollio sought to attract users by exhibiting his collection of art in the libraries. The extent of Varro's involvement is not known, but Pollio honored the bibliophile: "In the library founded at Rome by Asinius Pollio, the earliest library in the world established out of the spoils of war, the only statue of a living person erected was that of Marcus Varro."³ Pliny makes several references to its ornamentation in the *Natural History*.

We must not pass over a novelty that has also been invented, in that likenesses made, if not of gold or silver, yet at all events of bronze that are set up in the libraries in honour of those whose immortal spirits speak to us in the same places.... At Rome this practice originated with Asinius Pollio, who first by founding a library made works of genius the property of the public.⁴

Not to be outdone, Augustus built two libraries early in his reign: one attached to the temple of the Apollo on the Palatine, the other in the name of his sister, Octavia. The buildings, as much as their contents, were a source of inspiration to poets. Writing in exile from Pontus, Ovid bemoans the ban on his works and his loss of access to the libraries.

I was conducted to the shining temple of the unshorn god, where alternating with the columns of foreign marble stand the figures of the Belids, the barbarian father with the drawn sword, and all those things which men of old or of modern times conceived in their learned souls are free for the inspection of those who read. ... As I sought to no purpose, from that abode the guard who presides over the holy place commanded me to depart. A second temple I approached, one close to a theatre; this too might not be visited by my feet. Nor did Liberty allow me to touch her halls, the first that were opened to learned books.⁵

Built of white Luna marble with columns of *giallo antico*, the temple of Apollo was one of the grandest buildings of Rome at the time of its dedication [28 B.C.E]. Vergil extolls its beauty — "Then to Phoebus and Trivia will I set up a temple of solid marble."⁶ Suetonius is more informative: "He reared the temple of Apollo in that part of his house on the Palatine for which the soothsayers declared that the god had shown his desire by striking it with lightning. He joined to it colonnades with Latin and Greek libraries."⁷ These were the first of the great imperial libraries. The temple was large enough to accommodate meetings of the Senate and conveniently situated near the palace complex. Pliny the Younger recounts how Claudius, having heard some noise from the library, interrupted his walk along the Palatine and casually dropped in to hear Nonianus recite one of his compositions.⁸

The library buildings may well have been planned to accommodate a growing collection, the architects keeping in mind the problems faced by the Ptolemies with the lack of space in the Museion. Though initially rather sparse, there were, nevertheless, enough books for Horace to urge Celsius to be more original, instead of drawing on works he

found in the Palatine library.⁹ The library may not have been fully stocked during Augustus' lifetime. As Horsfall admits,

We will perhaps never be able to say whether the Palatine library actually did contain empty rooms (or at least) niches, awaiting the literature that would fill them, but Horace's two references to the 'empty' temple and to 'filling' Apollo's shrine with books suggest that this was how contemporaries did in some sense perceive the situation.¹⁰

The collection needed to be replenished frequently: it burned in the fire during the reign of Nero and several times after that. At the end of the first century C.E., Domitian restored the apsidial halls of the structure and replaced many of the books with copies made in Alexandria. Suetonius: "He provided for having the libraries, which were destroyed by fire, renewed at very great expense, seeking everywhere for copies of the lost works, and sending scribes to Alexandria to transcribe and correct them."¹¹ These copies seem to have survived longer. Marcus Aurelius writes to Marcus Cornelius Fronto (ca. 144-145) of having taken the Palatine copies of Cato's speeches with him on his journey;¹² the Palatine library was probably treated as an extension of the private collections of the emperors. The entire complex perished in a conflagration on the night of March 18-19, 363, "the fury of the flames being such that only the Sybilline books were saved from the wreck."¹³

The Sybilline books were probably in the care of the priests or priestesses of Apollo. Gaius Julius Hyginus, a freedman of Augustus, was the first librarian. A grammarian and historian by training, he also found the time to teach.¹⁴ The fact that he died destitute was probably a consequence of his close ties with Ovid. It is uncertain how much real authority he had: the proximity of the imperial residence and his social status may have resulted in Augustus maintaining control over library policy and administration. He may have supervised the *librarii*, the scribes responsible for reproductions. The librarian was mainly concerned with the acquisition and classification of the books.

Many books came from confiscated private libraries. Varro's was plundered during his proscription by Mark Antony in 43 C.E. and a vast number of books destroyed.¹⁵ The remaining may have found their way into a public collection. The proscription of Cicero resulted in his death also on Antony's orders. It is conceivable that Antony commandeered the collections from Cicero's villas, as he did from others. Dix suggests that the books were sent to one of the new public libraries after his death.¹⁶ The Porticus Octaviae seems a logical destination. Octavia had dedicated a library there in 23 B.C.E. in memory of her son, Marcus Claudius Marcellus.¹⁷ Antony married Octavia to strengthen his ties to the young Caesar and a brief period of harmony between the families followed.¹⁸ At this time, Antony would have promoted Octavia's literary interests, just as he later conferred the Pergamene library on Cleopatra. While by no means as large as the Attalid collection, Cicero's had been chosen and organized professionally. It is possible that the skilled slaves employed in Cicero's library found employment here under Gaius Melissus whom Augustus, on the recommendation of Maecenas, had appointed to head the Porticus Octaviae.¹⁹ A former slave, freed by Augustus, he was also a well-educated grammarian. Since there are no inscriptions to augment Suetonius, it is difficult to determine whether Melissus started out as a library slave, a *vilicus a bibliotheca*, and worked up to *procurator*. Other inscriptions merely indicate that a head-librarian held the title of *procurator bibliothecarum* or *procurator a bibliothecis*, but do not detail his responsibilities.

The building was lost in fires of 80 C.E. Partial remains from the period of Domitian and its appearance on the Forma Urbis make a reconstruction possible:

It enclosed a rectangular area, 118 metres in width and somewhat longer in length, and consisted of a colonnade formed by a double row of granite columns, twenty-eight in each row in front. ... Besides the temples (to Jupiter Stator and Juno) there were within the enclosure a bibliotheca, a curia Octaviae, and a schola or scholae. Whether these were different parts of one building, or entirely different structures, is uncertain.²⁰

Like the Palatine enclave, the Porticus Octaviae too, was elaborately decorated. Again, Pliny provides a catalogue of the paintings and sculpture, many by Greek painters and sculptors: Antiphilus, Artemon, Pheidias, and Praxiteles, to name but a few.²¹

By the end of the first century B.C.E., the populace of Rome could find not just books in the three new libraries, but splendid works of art as well. Before his death during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79, Pliny chronicled exhaustively the paintings, statuary, and portraiture, together with biographical sketches of the artists and sculptors, and histories of the works. All that we know of the decoration of the late-Republican public libraries come from this account and a few Roman copies of the Greek originals.

These early institutions set the tone for all subsequent libraries in Rome and the Empire. Art gallery-libraries proliferated in the following decades. Ovid recommends the porticus Augustus erected for his wife, Livia: "Nor should you avoid the Livian colonnade which, scattered o'er with ancient paintings keeps its founder's name...."²³ A large number of inscriptions survive from the temple to the deified Augustus which indicate the presence of a library, begun by Livia and Tiberius, and completed by Caligula. It, too, suffered in the fire in 80 and was rebuilt by Domitian. Tiberius may have opened the library in his Palatine palace to the intelligentsia as a gesture of largesse, with a member of the emperor's personal staff in charge. Indulging in tongue-in-cheek humor, Marcus Aurelius suggests that in order to get copies of Cato's speeches, Fronto had best "get round the librarian of Tiberius' library [*Tiberianus bibliothecarius*]: a little douceur will be necessary, in which he and I can go shares when I come back to town."²⁴ Though by no means open to the masses, intellectuals were encouraged. Like the other monuments, these libraries were generally symbols of propaganda, intended to display the benevolence and generosity of the imperial family.

Vespasian was fully alive to this concept when he built a new forum with its Temple of Peace. Nash places the library in a building on the south-east side of the forum. He adds, "The marble plan of Septimius Severus [193-211 C.E.] was attached to the north-east wall of this structure. An open hall adjoined it, and extended as far as the wall of the Temple, bordered by columns on the side of the Forum."²⁵ With the map of the city located on the exterior wall, the library obviously served as an information bureau. Inside, the collection may have contained state documents pertaining to the Jewish campaign, as well as materials of a scholarly nature.²⁶ Numerous literary sources indicate the library contained a wealth of art, though by this time, contemporary replicas outnumbered the Hellenic masterpieces.²⁷ There are bound to have been treasures from the plunder taken in Jerusalem, both books and works of art. Well over two centuries after the booty from Pydna formed the basis of the first collection, the Roman library was still dependent on military success for continued state funding.

Spoils of war provided the financial basis for Trajan's building programs. A stunning victory against the Dacians expanded the boundaries of the empire. In Rome, Trajan commemorated his triumph in 113 by building the largest of the imperial fora, dominated by the Basilica Ulpia and the imposing column. In addition to its commercial and political functions, the Forum also served as a cultural center. Makowiecka comments on the purpose of the hemicycles: "One should pay attention to two large semicircular exedrae situated at the longer sides of the Forum. The intention of those exedrae as a place for all sorts of lectures, recitations and philosophical disputations is unquestionable."²⁸ Also in the Forum were Greek and Roman libraries. The two buildings, abutting the north east wall of the Forum, faced each other and were initially connected with a colonnade. James Packer's excavations in the mid-80s revealed enough of the monument to allow a

new reconstruction.²⁹ In its heyday, the forum was overwhelming. The libraries were an integral part of the design. Packer:

Fragmentary remains show that the interior walls were veneered with pavonazzetto, the white purple-veined marble from Asia Minor. The columns of the two interior orders were also of pavonazzetto, while those of the central tabernacle at the west end of the room were of giallo antico, a rich golden marble with purple veining. The gray granite slabs of the floor recalled the columns in the interior of the adjacent Basilica Ulpia. The polished wooden leaves of the doors of the armaria must have provided rich accents that would have complemented the brightly painted stuccos on the groin vaults above.³⁰

Varro and Pliny would have delighted in the libraries; Gellius browsed the shelves.³¹ It is possible that much of the material was archival, including histories, campaign reports, and treatises. In subsequent centuries, the biographers of the later emperors drew heavily on materials in the Ulpian library for their research.³² The Forum and its library survived into the fifth century.

Having built the most magnificent Forum, Trajan also commissioned public baths. The enormous complex with pools, halls, and gymnasia provided comfort for the body and stimuli for the mind: libraries and reading rooms were incorporated into the plans. The practice was continued in the Baths of Caracalla. The holdings in these libraries were probably lighter reading, and one hopes, Ovid, banned from the Augustan libraries, finally found a home.

At its height under Trajan and Hadrian, the empire covered most of Europe, North Africa, and parts of Asia. The provinces were not overlooked. Pausanias touches on Hadrian's architectural contributions in Athens. In the temple of Hera and Zeus Panellenios, decorated with a hundred pillars of Phrygian marble, a gilded roof and alabaster walls, statues and painting, was a library.³³ It is likely that provincial libraries

were similarly, if not as richly, endowed as the libraries in Rome, though cities which had a great library tradition, such as Alexandria and Ephesos, may well have rivalled Rome. Cagnat lists the sites of Roman libraries throughout the empire.³⁴

Library patronage was not restricted to the emperors and the state. Beginning with Octavia, wealthy aristocrats and scholars funded public libraries in Italy and abroad. Pliny the Younger donated one to the youth of his hometown Novum Comum (modern Como).³⁵ Cagnat adds that the library in Timgad (in modern Algeria), founded in the third century by M. Julius Quintianus Flavius Rogatinus, cost 400,000 sesterces.³⁶ One wonders what Lucullus would have had to say to such expenditure! It is a pity that none survived past the sixth century.

The collapse and eventual breakup of the Roman Empire, changed, among other things, the character of libraries. Lavish public institutions, maintained at the expense of the emperor, and the private possessions of a wealthy and erudite aristocracy all but vanished. The monastic library would appear strange to Romans of the early imperial era. However, while the buildings were destroyed or reappointed, their contents were often saved. Much of ancient literature has been lost, but what is extant today, is due, in large part, to the monks who laboriously copied and illustrated pagan works. Indeed, these manuscripts are almost our only source to the classical world: most of the originals have long since disappeared.

NOTES

1. Suet. *Caes.* 44.2.
2. Suet. *Aug.* 29.5.
3. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 7:30.115
4. Plin. (supra n. 3) 35:2.10.
5. Ovid. *Trist.* 3:1.59-72.
6. Verg. *Aen.* 6.69.
7. Suet. *Aug.* 29.3
8. Plin. *Epist.* 1.13.
9. Hor. *Epist.* 1:3.16-17.
10. N. Horsfall, "Empty shelves on the Palatine" *Greece and Rome* 40:1 (1993) 62-63.
11. Suet. *Dom.* 20. Oddly, Domitian himself took no personal interest in the books, reading, or libraries.
12. Fronto, *Epist.* 4:5.2.
13. R. Lanciani, *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome* (New York 1979) 140.
14. Suet. *De Gram.* 20.
15. Gell. 3:10.17.
16. T. Dix, *Private and Public Libraries at Rome in the First Century B.C: a Preliminary Study in the History of Roman Libraries* (Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1986) 210.
17. Plut. *Marc.* 30.6. Augustus also dedicated the theater nearby.
18. Plut. *Ant.* 29.4-30.3.
19. Suet. (supra n. 12) 21.
20. Platner-Ashby (Rome 1965) 427.
21. Plin. (supra n. 3) 34:13.31, 35:37.114, 35:40.139, 36:4.15, 36:4.36.
22. *CIL* 6:4431-4435, 6:5192.
23. Ovid, *Ars Am.* 1:70.

24. Fronto (supra n. 12) 4:5.2.
25. E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (New York 1961) 439.
26. Gell. 5:21.9, 16:8.2.
27. Plin. (supra n. 3) 35:36.102, 35:36.109, 36:4.27, 36:11.58. Pausanias, however, contends that the statue of Cheimon by Naucydes is from Argos. Paus. 6:9.3
28. E. Makowiecka, *The Origin and Evolution of Architectural Form of Roman Library* (Warsaw 1970) 54.
29. J. Packer, "The West Library in the Forum of Trajan: the Architectural Problems and some Solutions," in Russell T. Scott and Ann Reynold Scott, eds., *Eius Virtutis Sudiosi: Classical and Postclassical Studies in Memory of Frank Edward Brown* (Studies in the History of Art 43, Washington 1993) 421-44.
30. Packer (supra n. 29) 426.
31. Gell. 11:17.1.
32. *Hist. Aug. Aur* 1:7-10, 8:1, 24:7; *Tac.* 8:1; *Prob.* 2:1; *Num.* 11:3.
33. Paus. 1:18.9.
34. M. Cagnat, *Les Bibliothèques municipales dans l'empire romain* (Paris 1896) 7-9.
35. Plin. *Epist.* 1:8.
36. Cagnat (supra n. 34) 9.

RENAISSANCE: THE MEDICI AND THE FLORENTINE LIBRARIES

I shall only observe that the principal Ornament of a Library,
is the Number and Variety of the Books contained in it, and
chiefly their being collected from among the learned Remains
of Antiquity.

The Ten Books of Architecture (8:9) Leone Battista Alberti

During the period between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance, the emphasis shifted from Homer and Vergil to the Bible and the teachings of the Church fathers. The pre-Christian works, however, remained a part of the academic curriculum and continued to be available to scholars. By the end of the thirteenth century, the development of universities and university libraries enabled laymen to study the ancients, facilitating the revival of humanism. Access to these sources allowed the late medieval nobility, artists, and writers, to emulate their predecessors from the Classical world. Were it not for the pervasive influence of ancient art and literature throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance could not have occurred.

The rise of secular education increased the demand for more universities throughout Europe. Artists could look to ancient remains for inspiration, but also studied the ancient sources: Alberti, and later, Palladio quote Vitruvius while discussing Roman architecture. Writers found their Muses in the libraries: Petrarch at the Sorbonne, Boccaccio in Florence. Humanism spread across the continent, but as Jackson comments, took hold particularly in Italy:

As war, pestilence, politics and the other developments noted by Richard de Bury took cultural leadership away from France in the late fourteenth century, a deep-running enthusiasm for all Latin writings of yore arose, an enthusiasm Italian-nationalistic in part but also philological, revolving around original classical sources, the hallmark of the Humanist.¹

A prime example is *The Inferno*, where the pagan Vergil is Dante's guide to the Underworld. However, Renaissance humanism varied from the ancient Greek and Roman. Jackson continues:

The Renaissance Humanists enriched contemporary and later literary and educational life by accenting the Latin classic style in oratory, poetry, history, and ethics. But they were neither scientifically inclined nor serious students of philosophy as antiquity or the Middle Ages had known it.²

Despite Jackson's contention, philosophy was studied and is reflected in the literature. By the early fourteenth century, the works of Plato were being translated into Latin, then studied in the original. On the topic of metamorphosis, Pico della Mirandola mentions the mysteries of Proteus described by Asclepius of Athens and the Pythagorean transformation of evildoers into beasts. If the humanists did not readily take to all aspects of Greek philosophy, one possible reason is that it was at odds with Christian beliefs. Though their keen interest in the Classical world did not sway the faith of the Renaissance humanists, even the popes were humanist-scholars. While the Church did not succumb to Orphic-Pythagoreanism, the fact that the Vatican Library made a great effort to collect pagan works shows the extent to which humanism had penetrated Renaissance culture.³

Nor were science and mathematics entirely absent: Alberti takes both into account in his *Ten Books on Architecture*, in which he discusses not only design and style, but also the effect of nature on buildings. Perspective and geometry were of paramount importance to artists and architects in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Around the same time, another product of the technology of the age, printing, made the large scale reproduction of manuscripts possible. All these innovations had an impact on libraries, both in terms of building and collections, though manuscripts continued to be valued and collected by the wealthy patrons of the arts.

The acquisition of books during the early Renaissance reflected the monastic affirmation of learning. On the other hand, the concept of the library as a "temple of the Muses" is essentially Hellenic in nature. In an effort to reproduce and surpass the past, the literati of Renaissance Italy surrounded their books with works of art, housed in increasingly sumptuous structures. Materials in the early medieval libraries were intended for the use of the religious community. Though the largest were associated with monasteries, Renaissance libraries were open to a larger circle. They followed, to a certain extent, the pattern established in ancient Rome. Public libraries were donated and maintained by wealthy aristocratic families; their private collections later opened to the intelligentsia.

In Florence, the involvement with books and libraries can be traced to the mid-fifteenth century and the Medici. To say that Cosimo the Elder was to Florence what Augustus had been to Rome is exaggeration. It cannot be denied, however, that he adopted a similar stance. As Hyman points out:

Cosimo's protestations that he was nothing more than a private citizen of limited means were at variance with the facts. That his political authority was absolute, that his fortune was vast, and that many of the affairs of the Republic were settled at meetings held in Cosimo's palace, were common knowledge.⁴

As had the contributions of Aristotle and Pliny made possible new libraries in their times, so too did the collection of Niccolò Niccoli form the nucleus of the library of San Marco. An avid bibliophile, Niccoli had originally intended to leave his books to Santa Maria degli Angeli, but was persuaded to donate them instead to the new convent of San Marco.⁵ For this Cosimo was responsible, as he had been when Pope Eugene IV granted the Dominican friars the former Sylvestrian monastery. Indeed, as Ullman notes, by 1436, "Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo assumed the role of founding patrons, and Michelozzo

Michelozzi, their favorite architect, was commissioned to build an almost totally new convent."⁶ Michelozzo took eight years to construct the convent which Ullman describes:

In no single element of this complex was the union of austerity and vigor more perfect than in the library. Precedence had been given to the dormitories, the church and the cloisters, so that the library was the last element, completed only in 1444. Michelozzo succeeded in creating at the same time the architectural model for the renaissance library and its most effective realization. The long narrow hall, divided into three parts by two rows of plain columns, vaulted and luminous, forms the perfect environment for ascetic study.⁷

It was not, however, devoted solely to "ascetic study." Though religious texts were certainly a part of the collection, it also reflected Niccoli's interest in humanism and contained a large number of Greek and Latin works. One, a 13th century manuscript of Cicero's *Phillipics* has Niccoli's annotations in the margins.⁸ Also in the collection were the works of Apuleius and Asclepius. It appears as though his faith did not prevent him from acquiring, reading, even studying works on philosophy. Niccoli, unfortunately, never saw the library: he died in 1438.

Until the library was completed, the Medici were in charge of the books, received in part as redemption of Niccoli's debts. As a public institution, the library was governed by trustees, but controlled almost exclusively by the Medici. As had the Roman Emperors before them, the Medici made little distinction between the public library of San Marco and their own extensive — but private — collections, arbitrarily transferring materials from the one to the other. They also formulated the regulations regarding borrowing privileges, made clear by letters addressed to them, rather than to the librarian of San Marco. In 1450, Pope Nicholas V wrote to Cosimo for copies of Appian's *History* to make Latin translations for the Vatican collection. Some twenty years later, Federigo da Montefeltro made a similar request to Lorenzo the Magnificent.⁹

Cosimo had some reason to be possessive of San Marco. He not only financed the building, but sent his agents all over Europe to purchase materials which were added extensively to the library, augmenting and complementing Niccoli's collection.¹⁰ Its communal aspect was reinforced by generous contributions from private citizens.

Fifty years after its founding, San Marco was embroiled in the upheaval led by its vitriolic prior. Girolamo Savonarola condemned the humanistic interest in paganism and the Medici authority over the Republic. Again, the fate of the library was similar to that of its predecessors in late antiquity: the books survived both religious and political turmoil. More ironic is the fact that its collection actually increased. In 1497, Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, the humanist dean of the cathedral ordained by Savonarola, made a donation, "second only to Cosimo in the history of the library, [of] a large number of manuscripts and printed books,"¹¹ many by the pagan writers denounced by Savonarola. In fact, as the lists indicate, the larger portion of the bequest consisted of pagan works, ranging from Aristotle and Seneca to Herodotus and Suetonius. Thomas Aquinas and Chrysostom were also included, no doubt to appease the prior.

Petrarch had been the first to express an interest in placing his books in a public library for the intelligentsia of the Venetian Republic. His objective, "to acquire books 'at public expense,' even if only for 'scholars and gentlemen,' was a notion with the ring of novelty since it had apparently not been voiced since the days of Rome."¹² This plan was not realized and his collection was dispersed soon after his death. A public library in Florence began as a dream of the humanist Niccolò Niccoli. Cosimo de' Medici brought it to fruition. Though the Medici contributions to the library of San Marco began to decline after Cosimo's death, his successors continued as its patrons and to treat it as a Medici holding.

For the most part, they were more concerned with developing their private library in the Palazzo Medici. As well as sponsoring the public library of San Marco, Cosimo de' Medici also began a private collection in his new palace, also designed by Michelozzo. Here, in a small room, was Piero di Cosimo's *studietto*. Ames-Lewis provides details:

The room which housed Piero de' Medici's library ... was on the *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Medici, overlooking the Via Larga. ... It appears that the room measured about four by five and a half metres. It was probably ... closed by a barrel-vault which included twelve glazed-terracotta roundels; the colour-scheme of the vault into which these roundels were set was white, porphyry-red and green.... The floor was probably of glazed-terracotta tiles by Luca della Robbia.¹³

Unfortunately, all descriptions of the *studietto* are based on literary accounts, as nothing remains of the original room. If other Renaissance rooms are any indication, it is highly probable that the *studietto* was decorated in some way. "The floor may have provided [it] with a richly patterned and highly colourful decorations."¹⁴ Decorated floors were common in antiquity. Vitruvius recommends that floor tiles be laid in a herring-bone pattern, "carefully finished, so as to be without gaps or ridges, but all flat and rubbed down to rule. When the rubbing down is completely finished, sift powdered marble on top, and lay on a coating of lime and sand."¹⁵ The architects of the Renaissance knew of the ancient monuments and had seen some of those still extant. Alberti lists a few examples:

The Ancients stained the Pavements of their Porticoes with Labyrinths, both square and circular. I have myself seen Pavements stained in Imitation of the Bell-flower-weed, with its Branches twining about very beautifully. Other [sic] have paved their chambers with a Sort of *Mosaic* Work of Marble, in Imitation of Carpets, others in Imitation of Garlands and Branches of Trees. It was a very ingenious Invention of *Osis*, who strewed the Pavement of Pergamus with Inlaid Work.¹⁶

In keeping with the styles of the mid-Quattrocento, wall painting would have been in fresco. Ames-Lewis suggests that the "*studietto* may well have had a cycle of famous writers whose works were represented in his library."¹⁷ It is probable that contemporary

schemes used in other prominent libraries of the time — in the Vatican and at the Montefeltro collection — were a direct influence. This form of decoration, from the first century B.C.E. and the portrait busts of writers in the library of Asinius Pollio, is mentioned by Pliny the Elder. Piero would have been aware of it: he owned, and presumably read, the *Natural History*.

Whatever the wall decoration, storage for the books and a surface upon which they were read must have formed a major part of the furnishings. There is still some controversy as to how exactly the books were shelved. Ames-Lewis believes some "may have been placed flat on forward-sloping shelves."¹⁸ In addition to books, *objets d'art* were also kept in the *studietto*. The more precious materials — gems and silver — were probably placed in cupboards built along the walls. These, too, would have been decorated, most likely with marquetry panels. Intarsiated cupboards were in vogue and Piero would have seen those in the ducal libraries at Urbino and the d'Este estates. At the Vatican, "the Library's marquetry cupboards had been installed on the anteroom walls of the Sistine Chapel" and depicted "library cupboards with half-opened doors, behind which the books lie horizontally, according to the custom of the ancient libraries."¹⁹ They were designed by a Florentine craftsman, Giovannino de' Dolci. That intarsia was used in the *studietto* is mentioned in several sources, including the *Terze Rime* and in a letter to Piero from the intarsia worker, Arduino da Biasio. Whether they were also in *trompe l'oeil*, as were the Vatican cabinets, is not known.

Given the limited space in the room, the rapidly growing collection of manuscripts was probably based on quality, rather than quantity. No multiple copies are listed in the inventories. Instead, every volume was impeccably designed. Inscribed in the humanistic script with elaborate illustrations and decorations, Piero's manuscripts are works of art in

themselves. In these masterpieces one can see how ancient content and medieval craftsmanship were reconciled to create a new fashion, distinctively Renaissance.

While the elaborate embellishment of the room itself may not have met with Alberti's approval, he would have been pleased with the decorative aspect of the books. In one feature, Piero di Cosimo's library was unique: the color of the bindings matched the subject-classification scheme. Though none of the original bindings has survived, the "color-code" appears in several inventories. Despite some discrepancies in later lists, it appears as though religious texts were bound in blue, grammar in yellow, history in red, art in green, philosophy in white, and poetry in a shade of purple. The bright colors and varying textures of the leather and velvet bindings must have echoed those of the tiled floor and painted walls, creating an overall effect of splendor. The Renaissance library had moved closer to its Classical ideal.

The private library begun by Cosimo and developed by his sons, Giovanni and Piero, reached its peak under Lorenzo. Under his aegis, the collection was vastly increased. At the end of the fourteenth century, there were over a thousand codices in the Medici collection, which, by this time, had also grown eclectic and esoteric. To the seventy seven codices purchased from Francesco Sassetti, were added a large number of Greek manuscripts bought from Francesco Filelfo, and a collection of 10th and 11th century codices on ancient medicine from the monastery of Mount Athos compiled by his Greek librarian, Janos Lascaris.²¹ Rivalled by the Montefeltro and d'Este collections, it was surpassed only by the Vatican. Lorenzo made the library available to scholars, including fellow-collector, Federigo da Montefeltro. Among the Florentines, the bibliophile and humanist, Angelo Poliziano, was an influential figure in the circle of erudite aristocrats to which Lorenzo belonged.

Not long after Lorenzo's death, following the political and religious revolts spearheaded by Savonarola, the Medici lost both power and palace. The monks of San Marco tried to retrieve those parts of the collection appropriated by the Medici, but only temporarily. Repossessed in 1508 by Lorenzo's youngest son, Giovanni (then Cardinal, later Pope Leo X), the entire Medici collection was deposited in the Villa Medici in Rome where he continued the family tradition of collecting rare and ancient texts.²² These included the first four books of the *Annals*, done at the Abbey of Corvey in the 9th century (still the oldest extant codex of Tacitus). His successors, in accordance to his will, returned the library to Florence where it was housed in a new location.

Little is left of Cosimo's palace. Piero di Cosimo and Lorenzo would scarcely recognize it today. Over the centuries, it has changed hands and undergone many transformations, architecturally and in use. Acquired by the Riccardi in 1659, it was sold to the Granducal government in 1814. Till 1911,

The building was subjected to a series of humiliating changes to adapt it to its new role as a government office building. Some rooms were relegated to use as a prison, others (with a few exceptions like the Gozzoli Chapel) were divided and subdivided into cubicles and offices, the courtyard became a garage, and the original pattern was largely obliterated.²³

The libraries, not surprisingly, were neither humiliated nor obliterated. Moved to the convent of San Lorenzo, they formed the core of the new library commissioned by Giulio de' Medici and housed in what soon became one of the most magnificent of Florentine libraries: the Laurentian.

San Lorenzo had been the primary church of the Medici since the time of Cosimo the Elder who had commissioned Michelozzo to complete the complex begun by Brunelleschi. Unable to restore the library to the palace, Giulio, as Pope Clement VII, decided instead to found a new library at San Lorenzo. This reflected the shift in the

Medici status from banker-princes to high ranking clergy, but also honored the Medici prince responsible for enlarging the collection, Lorenzo the Magnificent. The library was no longer a private collection. As a part of the cloister of San Lorenzo, it served a larger clientele, including scholars from the University. Given its utilitarian function and monastic location, Clement VII opted for a less ostentatious façade, concentrating instead on the collection itself. Michelangelo was appointed architect. James Ackerman:

In the initial instructions of 1524, economy and convenience were guides to the choice of site, and preoccupation with utility moulded the plan; separation of Latin and Greek books in the first scheme, later the isolation of rare books into small studies, finally the amalgamation of the studies into a large rare-book room.²⁴

There was a precedent for such a library in Florence: the plan was based on, and similar to, San Marco. Ackerman describes it in some detail:

The long, narrow three-aisled room built on the upper level of a two-storey free-standing structure to protect the collection from dampness and to provide good lighting became the model for a majority of the monastic libraries of the succeeding centuries, Michelangelo's included.²⁵

Michelangelo gave San Lorenzo a new touch, both in the vestibule and the interior. Restricted by the Pope from developing unorthodox methods of lighting the vestibule, Michelangelo, nevertheless devised a scheme of recessed columns which was both aesthetic and structurally sound. As a result, Ackerman concludes, "the structural function of the column and wall are exactly the opposite of their visual effects."²⁶ The design of the staircase, where two flights flanked the central entry, had first been proposed by Giuliano da Sangallo, but was executed here by Ammannati after Michelangelo's model. The form and placement give the staircase a sculptural quality while fulfilling the practical requirement of easy access into the library. The unusual entrance was only a hint of what lay past the door above.

Inside, deviating from the traditional, Michelangelo used a system of buttresses and blind arcades which allowed for thinner walls and a series of bay windows. These increased the light in the reading room and created a sense of space reminiscent of an earlier age. This synthesis of Classical, Romanesque, and Gothic, was a combination typically Renaissance. In Piero's *studietto*, intarsia was used primarily on the cabinets, with fresco decoration on the walls and ceilings and stone inlay for the floor. Here, the use of marquetry can be seen in the patterns on the floor, ceiling coffering, and the reading stalls, each element complementing another. The windows, rendered in clear and yellow glass, commemorate the founder, Clement VII, and ruler, Cosimo I, duke of Tuscany. Below the Medici crest are their personal insignia: keys, canopy, tiara, and the motto CANDOR ILLESVS for the Pope, for the duke: three feathers over the ducal crown, two more with the inscription DVABUS, satyrs, a diamond-encrusted crown and the motto SEMPER.²⁷ Every part of the structure, from floor to ceiling, and including the furniture, was an integral part of the scheme, creating an overall effect of delicacy and harmony. Ruskin could have been thinking of Michelangelo when he remarked, "No person who is not a great sculptor or painter can be an architect. If he is not a sculptor or painter, he can only be a *builder*."

Cosimo I was to San Lorenzo what his ancestor and namesake had been to San Marco. He not only recovered those manuscripts which had been dispersed before the founding of the Laurentian library, but received from Antonio Petrei, the manuscripts of Boccaccio and Petrarch. The acquisition of the collection of San Gimignano, begun in 1460 by Mattia Lupi, and the group of manuscripts from the Benedictine abbey of San Salvatore a Settimo expanded the already large collection.²⁸ When it opened to the public in 1571, the library had around 3,000 manuscripts: the "Plutei," characterized by their red binding with chains.²⁹ Cosimo's concern for the conservation of the collection led to the appointment of Pier Vettori who was placed in charge of management and maintenance.

The *Medici Vergil*, a fifth century codex from the monastery of St. Columbanus at Bobbio was Francesco I's contribution. Even after the Medici influence declined, the library continued to flourish, supported by generous gifts. The collection now consists of 11,500 manuscripts.³⁰

The Medici and their associates attempted to recreate Rome of the first century in Florence of the fifteenth, but could not deny the intervening millennium in art, architecture, or literature. The shift in religious beliefs had an irrevocable impact. In terms of their libraries, the *studietto* of Piero came closest to the Roman. The Marcian and Laurentian were essentially monastic, with a veneer of patronage in the imperial tradition. The libraries of the Renaissance embodied both classical and medieval elements and can best be described as neoclassical.

NOTES

1. S. Jackson, *Libraries and Librarianship in the West: A Brief History* (New York 1974) 102-103.
2. Jackson (supra n. 1) 103-104.
3. Pope Nicholas V "sent his representatives all over Europe, and even into the east to search for valuable manuscripts." On his death in 1455, an inventory of his Papal Library listed "about 1,200 entries, of which more than 800 were Latin codices and approximately 400 were Greek." B. Weitbrecht in A. Stickler, ed., *The Vatican Library — its History and Treasures* (Florence 1985; Yorktown Heights, NY 1989) 12-13. Many of these must have been ancient texts, for humanists used the library heavily.
4. I. Hyman, *Fifteenth Century Florentine Studies: the Palazzo Medici and a Ledger for the Church of San Lorenzo* (New York 1977) 91. Throughout his narrative of the life of Augustus, Suetonius notes Augustus's reticence in accepting honors and titles.
5. L. Gargan, "Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo de' Medici e la biblioteca di S. Marco," in G. Cavallo, ed., *Le biblioteche nel mondo antico e medievale* (Rome 1988) 171. The terms of Niccoli's 1430 will regarding the bestowal of his books were altered in 1437.
6. B. Ullman, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence* (Padua 1972) 4-5.
7. Ullman (supra n. 6) 5. It was during this time that Niccoli was assured a library in San Marco.
8. E. Garin, "La Biblioteca di S. Marco" in *La Chiesa e il Convento di San Marco a Firenze* (Florence 1989) 100 n. 6.
9. Ullman (supra n. 6) 14-15. Pope Nicholas V was familiar with the collection. While still Tomaso Parentucelli da Serezana, he had assisted in the establishment of the library. Vespasiano da Bisticci comments on his expertise: "... as to the arranging of a library there was no one to equal him, and for this reason Cosimo dei Medici, who was about to set in order the library of S. Marco, wrote to Maestro Tomaso begging him to send direction as to how a library should be formed. ... [He] wrote the instructions with his own hand, and sent them to Cosimo ; moreover he did the same with the libraries of Santo Marco, of the Badia of Fiesole, of the Duke of Urbino and of Signor Alessandro Sforza. F. Vespasiano da Bisticci, "Pope Nicolas V" in *Renaissance princes, popes, and prelates* (New York 1963) 38.
10. Vespasiano (supra n. 9) "Cosimo de' Medici" 219.
11. Ullman (supra n. 6) 38-39.
12. Jackson (supra n. 1) 106.

13. F. Ames-Lewis, *The Library and Manuscripts of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici* (New York 1984) 13
14. Ames-Lewis (supra n. 13) 13.
15. Vitr. 7.1.
16. L. Alberti, *Ten Books on Architecture* 9:4 (London 1965) 192. The *studietto* floor may have been too ornate for Alberti's taste. He continues, "Agrippa was very right in making his Floors of common baked Earth. I, for my Part, hate every Thing that favours of Luxury and Profusion, and am best pleased with those Ornaments which arise principally from the Ingenuity and Beauty of the Contrivance."
17. Ames-Lewis (supra n. 13) 14.
18. Ames-Lewis (supra n. 13) 14.
19. Weithrecht (supra n. 3) 14.
20. Ames-Lewis (supra n. 13) 15. He adds, "It seems likely that the decoration was of the early to mid-1450s, and was clearly considered a priority over the decoration of the Chapel, where Benozzo Gozzoli was working in 1459."
21. A. Morandini, "Profilo Storico della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana," in *La Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana* (Florence 1986) 16.
22. Morandini (supra n. 21) 18.
23. Hyman (supra n. 4) 176-177. Wolfgang Bulst traces the subsequent uses of the Palazzo Medici in "Uso e trasformazione del palazzo mediceo fino ai Riccardi" in G. Cherubini and G. Fanelli, eds., *Il Palazzo Medici Riccardi di Firenze* (Florence 1990) 98-129.
24. J. Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo* (Chicago 1986) 97.
25. Ackerman (supra n. 24) 96.
26. Ackerman (supra n. 24) 111.
27. G. Marchini, "Le Vetrate della Biblioteca Laurenziana," in *Il complesso monumentale di San Lorenzo* (Florence 1984) 265-266.
28. Morandini (supra n. 21) 23.
29. C. Bianchi, ed., *Biblioteche d'arte e fondi di interesse artistico in territorio fiorentino* (Rome 1988), 73.
30. Bianchi (supra n. 29) 73.

EPILOGUE

Libraries have gained much from their ancient predecessors, each generation taking something from other stages of development. The sacred libraries of Egypt are not far removed from the medieval cloisters. Public libraries, first broached in classical Athens, are taken for granted today as they were then. The Hellenistic monarchs are perhaps the most emulated: Roman emperors, Renaissance merchant-princes and Popes, and the nineteenth century industrialists in their various ways tried to reproduce the splendor of the fourth century in their undertakings. And, in 1974, the oil baron, J. Paul Getty, recreated Piso's Herculanean villa in Malibu, California. Varro's ideal library, in which books and art combine in harmony, still lives.

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COLLIS
VIRINALIS

MERCATI TRAIANEI

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BAS. TRAIANI
VIA LIBERTATICA

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