The papers by Freedman, Gorman, and Malinconico, all of whom address aspects of catalog production, give an excellent overview of the complexities of the decision process involved in this highly technical aspect of library operation.

With the current trend toward development of network services and their integration into library operations in a cost effective manner, it is refreshing to have Veneziano and Aagaard chronicle their experiences developing the in-house online system at Northwestern University. Their work shows that with a properly managed effort and rather modest in-house funding sophisticated online systems can be operated as well as developed by a large library.

Editorial quality of the volume is excellent. If one deficiency could be noted, it is purely on the point of the appropriateness to the topic of the paper by Folk. Certainly, a paper on the impact of computers on the publishing enterprise is of interest to librarians and can serve as an example from a sister field but is not purely within the context of the economics of library automation which deals with library internal operations largely. However, Folk’s paper is an excellent overview from the publisher’s viewpoint, and as such it is a valuable addition to the volume, aesthetic judgments being laid aside in favor of technical substance.

Those who have acquired past volumes in this series also should acquire this one. Libraries and individuals building collections in the library automation or the cost/benefits of information systems will derive more benefit from this slim, well-designed collection of papers than the modest price expended in its acquisition.—Audrey N. Grosch, University of Minnesota Libraries.


As the assistant keeper of fifteenth-century printed books at the British Library for twenty years, the author of this book is well prepared to “assess and correct our existing knowledge of Caxton’s life and work.” In fact, Painter presents the most thorough published reassessment of the historical record since Blades’ biography of exactly one
century ago. In doing so, he unstintingly corrects not only Blades but also Duff, Crotch, and such recent authorities as N. F. Blake.

For example, in an earlier review in this journal of Blake's *Caxton*, this reviewer mentioned that Blake maintained that Caxton was born at Strood. Painter, however, suggests that Tenterden, “a weaving town in the heart of the Kentish Weald, with a Causton Wood near by, [also] would fit his own statement perfectly, and it would not be surprising if the elder Thomas Caxton of Tenterden was his father, and the younger one his brother.” In similar fashion, Painter challenges traditional beliefs in light of new or previously ignored evidence regarding the rest of Caxton’s family, apprenticeship, and early merchant years.

In staying close to his sources, Painter’s perspective necessarily presents Caxton as a political man of some savvy, first as a Yorkist and in his later years as a Tudor. Caxton’s anti-Lancastrian views are well developed in the chapters on Caxton as Governor, Diplomat, and in Exile. “The events, persons, and movements of contemporary history in which Caxton was so intimately involved” are the backdrop for Painter’s drama.

Painter sets the stage for Caxton’s printing career by cogently arguing that Caxton’s master during his stay in Cologne was The Printer of *Flores sancti Augustini*, who may have been Johann Veldener. Almost certainly Veldener was the long-time supplier of Caxton’s type. With this scenario, Colard Mansion’s role is relegated to the “interchange of ideas and ambitions.” In later chapters, Caxton comes across as a humorous and witty human being and as a highly productive translator shaping our English language. Painter also suggests that Caxton’s printer’s device provides “a clue to the chronological labyrinth of his last years.” For the first time, evidently, a bibliographer examines the device not for what it means but for what it reveals as a bibliographic signpost. Painter discerns six states of the device and thereby reorders the popularly received chronology of Caxton’s canon.

Physically this book is similar to Blake’s book—nearly a companion volume. In several ways, moreover, the Painter work is...
both its compliment and its complement. Besides the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, illustration notes, select bibliography, and references, there is a “chronological list of Caxton’s editions . . . in accordance with the evidence and arguments brought forward in this book.”

We have the organizers of the Caxton Quincentenary to thank for focusing scholarly attention on Caxton and for stimulating such a lively and scholarly interchange on “one of the most famous yet least known of great Englishmen.”—John V. Richardson, Jr., Graduate Library School, Indiana University.


Since the end of World War II there has been a steady growth of interest in Japan, and the Western scholars have written on virtually every aspect of the Japanese society. Yet until now, no one has attempted to take a comprehensive look at the Japanese libraries. Toshokan by Theodore F. Welch is an excellent and well-researched compendium of the library world in Japan.

For every kind of library, the author traces its history and legal background and describes the present activities, providing an impressive array of statistics and other documentations. In twelve chapters he manages to provide rather penetrating descriptions of various libraries and the status of their librarians. The modern library concepts were transplanted in Japan by the Americans who brought many changes to Japan during the postwar occupation. In the past thirty years many of the Western ideas imposed on Japan have taken deep roots in the cultural milieu of the Japanese people, but the library has not found a significant place in the mainstream of Japanese life.

What emerges from Welch’s descriptions