

## Book Reviews

---

*RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* reviews books, reports, new periodicals, databases, websites, blogs, and other electronic resources, as well as exhibition, book, and auction catalogs pertaining directly and indirectly to the fields of rare book librarianship, manuscripts curatorship, archives management, and special collections administration. Publishers, librarians, and archivists are asked to send appropriate publications for review or notice to the Reviews Editor.

Due to space limitations, it may not be possible for all books received to be reviewed in *RBM*. Books or publication announcements should be sent to the Reviews Editor: Amy Cooper Cary, Raynor Memorial Library, Marquette University, 1415 W. Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53233-2221, e-mail: [amy.cary@marquette.edu](mailto:amy.cary@marquette.edu), (414) 288-5901.

---

**Michelle Levy and Tom Mole.** *The Broadview Introduction to Book History*. Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2017. 256p. \$31.95 (softcover). ISBN 978-1-55481-087-1.

*The Broadview Introduction to Book History* is designed as a companion to *The Broadview Reader in Book History*, published in 2014. In this new publication, Levy and Mole serve as authors, rather than editors. They have chosen to organize the volume under the same chapter headings as the previous work (“Materiality,” “Textuality,” “Printing and Reading,” “Intermediality,” and “Remediating”), and they state in their Introduction that the two books are intended to function in tandem.

What distinguishes this book from other introductory texts in book history is its focus. The authors concentrate as much on bibliography’s implications and interpretations as they do its timeline. Rather than a strictly chronological or geographical approach to the topic, *The Broadview Introduction to Book History* sets the historical information within a context of application. Levy and Mole also clearly define “book history” as not just a study of the codex; they are exploring “a much broader field that studies both material artefacts and the cultural practices of their creation and use.”<sup>1</sup>

The Introduction section is substantial enough to serve as a microcosm of the entire book. The prose is conversational in tone, and the choice of terminology appropriate for an introduction to the topic. However, from a visual perspective, the

---

1. Michelle Levy and Tom Mole, *The Broadview Reader in Book History* (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2017), xiii.

presentation compromises the content. The format of the book creates difficulties in reading. The font is small and, combined with the right- and left-justified text, the page has a sense of being “overfilled” with content. It would benefit from some subheadings and more white space on the page. Also, given the physical and visual components of the book-as-object subject matter, the book could have benefited from more illustrations—there are only thirteen, including a chart of *New York Times* subscription plans (147) that has been printed landscape and thus is difficult to read.

Most beneficial to the reader are the sections at the end of the volume, commencing with a “Brief Chronology” (extending to 7 pages) of the history of the book, beginning c. 3500 BCE. The timeline covers many of the high points in book history, but it could be a bit too granular for the student who is receiving his or her first introduction to the topic. The glossary that follows is also helpful, bearing resemblance to Carter & Barker’s *ABC for Book Collectors*, and Levy and Mole provide references to this and other works for more information. For ease of use throughout *The Broadview Introduction to Book History*, they have placed the glossary terms in bold type, indicating that a more substantial description of a given word or phrase can be found at the back. Finally, perhaps the most valuable feature of the book is the “Further Reading” list, which the authors have subdivided into categories to assist the reader in refining a research approach.

Levy and Mole have approached a topic that might seem, to those in the bibliographic community, as sufficiently represented in other introductory texts. However, this book fills a different niche: although the authors provide the standard historical information related to history of the book, it is secondary to a broader context of use that emphasizes the importance of studying a range of media beyond the codex. As a result, this book may not serve as the most effective ready-reference guide for the reader who is new to the topic and may be a bit too basic for a more advanced bibliographer. Its utility falls somewhere in the middle, as a contemplation of changes in physical and digital media and the evolving cultural and philosophical questions they reveal.—Jennifer K. Sheehan, *The Grolier Club*

**Science in the Archives: Past, Present, Futures.** Lorraine Daston, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. viii, 397p. Paperback, \$37.50 (ISBN 9780226432366).

It is a bit unfortunate that, in current parlance, the word *science* now embraces less than it once did, while the word *archive* has come to encompass so much. As a result, those who encounter *Science in the Archives: Past, Present, Futures*, a new volume edited by Lorraine Daston, may make unreasonable assumptions about its contents, when in fact the topics covered by the twelve historically framed essays are unexpectedly broad—from the history of the planets and earth’s stratigraphy, to the archiving