those who read French books in translation and those who read them in
the original language...."

Finally, the five appendices give a good deal of statistical information gleaned from
the STN archives and are really only interesting to the most hardcore book lover or
historian. I highly recommend this title to anyone with an interest in the history of
the book. It is an important work for its ability to show the cosmopolitan nature of
the 18th-century book trade and, possibly more important, it is a good read.—Rand
Boyd, MLIS, CA, Special Collections and Archives Librarian, Chapman University.

From Petrarch to Michelangelo. New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2012. xxxi,

The fifth volume in Konstantinos Staikos’ The History of the Library in Western Civil-
ization is essentially a discussion of the beginnings and spread of humanism during
the European Renaissance. In this context, a library is not a building designed to
house books; it is instead the printed word in and of itself. It is therefore logical
that much of the content in From Petrarch to Michelangelo is concerned with how the
dissemination of literature complemented and influenced Renaissance thought. To
this end, Staikos discusses topics such as the rediscovery of Greek and Roman texts
and the impetus to publish new translations, the movement of Byzantine scholars
to Western Europe, the influence of different publications and translations of the
Bible, and the collections of prominent individuals such as Montaigne and Thomas
Bodley.

The amount of material the author sets out to cover is impressive. The book is
divided into eight chapters, which are further divided into subsections—for ex-
ample, the focus of chapter 5 is Erasmus, but it also includes information about
the shift of print culture from Paris to Geneva, the rise of book fairs, and what
constitutes a Reformation library. This structure works better in some chapters
than in others. The eighth and final chapter, which discusses the physical archi-
tecture of early modern libraries, is effectively laid out, with separate sections
discussing iconography, furnishings, and the unique features of several promi-
inent institutions including the library of the Holy See and the Bodleian. The
Erasmus chapter, however, suffers from a lack of coherence. The connections
between the different themes are not as apparent as in chapter 8; as a result, the
narrative becomes muddled. The book might have benefited from more chapters
with each having a narrower focus, such as having one dedicated entirely to the
typography and the mechanics of printing, another one dedicated to the influ-
ence of religious change on printing and literature, and so forth. That having
been said, Staikos should be commended for trying to provide as comprehensive
a history as possible. The sometimes opaque nature of the text comes from trying to give as thorough an account as possible of a complex topic, rather than by leaving too much out.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this level of detail, it is difficult to see the series as a whole getting heavy use by scholars conducting in-depth research projects. This is due to the somewhat scattered nature of the text, which can make it difficult to pinpoint key concepts and ideas and which renders it unwieldy for someone wanting to find a concise description of one specific topic. However, for persons interested in libraries who wish to immerse themselves in lush detail, *From Petrarch to Michelangelo* shines in terms of sheer visual splendor. As is the case with the other four volumes, each chapter is lavishly illustrated with an abundance of glossy full-color and black-and-white photographs that depict books and manuscripts, library architecture, and historical figures. For those interested in a visual history of libraries and print culture, this volume is a treat.

Overall, *From Petrarch to Michelangelo* is a physically beautiful production whose content provides a relatively thorough, although decentralized, discussion of humanism. Mr. Staikos should be commended for the amount of research that has gone into this work, and the book certainly has a great deal of interesting, informative content. While it could arguably use a tighter overall structure, it is nevertheless an impressive accomplishment and provides an interesting discussion of how print culture functioned in the early modern period.—*Elizabeth Brander, Rare Books Librarian, Washington University School of Medicine.*


*Steam-Powered Knowledge: William Chambers and the Business of Publishing, 1820–1860* is an exploration of the emerging technologies in the mid-nineteenth century that led to a rise in the availability of low-cost books—cheap print, as it was called. New technologies such as the steam-powered printing press and stereotype plates converged with the emergence of railways and steamships. With these new techniques, books could be produced and sold at a significantly lower cost, making them accessible to a wider audience. A virtuous cycle was created; inexpensive books led to a rise in literacy in England that in turn increased the market for cheap print.

While William Chambers’ company, W. & R. Chambers, is the leading example of a publishing and printing company that benefited from these new technologies, it is not the sole focus of the book. In spite of the book’s title, Aileen Fyfe takes a wide view of the entire publishing and printing industry. To be sure, the strongest