

the original catalog, and the size of the book when known. On the whole, the individual entries are recorded quite accurately, both for German and for non-German books.

Comparison with American auction records indicates a distinctly lower price trend, and this phenomenon might well be the subject of a fairly careful investigation. It would seem, in general, to be advantageous for American librarians to participate more actively in European auctions rather than to pay a premium to domestic firms who acquire books we want at these same auctions.—*Lawrence S. Thompson, University of Kentucky Libraries.*

## Contemporary Book Design

*Contemporary Book Design.* By Ralph E. Eckerstrom. "Beta Phi Mu Chap-Book Number One." [Urbana, University of Illinois Library] 1953. 26 p. \$3.00.

Eckerstrom's work is the first in a series of books to be published under the auspices of Beta Phi Mu, National Library Science Honorary Fraternity. The fraternity, founded at the University of Illinois in the spring of 1949, decided that "first attention should be given to the publication of a series of books which would be authoritative and worthwhile contributions to the literature of books and librarianship and would, at the same time, have the virtue of presenting the best in book design." The volume here under review admirably fulfills the scope and promise of the stated purpose of this series. If succeeding volumes in the series are of like excellence, the Beta Phi Mu Chap-Books will prove distinguished contributions to the literature of books and librarianship.

Mr. Eckerstrom, art director of the University of Illinois Press since 1949, defines book design as "the manner in which the paper, cloth, ink, type face, and illustrations are bound together in book form to make a visual presentation of the author's ideas." In his brief essay, the author contracts traditional book design with that of today, noting the new techniques now being employed in the composition of books. Type faces, illustrations, color, paper, binding—each plays an important role in the composition of the physical book; and the role of each is discussed clearly and concisely.

This contemporary "chap-book" was designed by the author, and he has agreed to design the other volumes to be published in the series. The format of the present volume offers ample proof that Mr. Eckerstrom practices in book design that which he preaches. *Contemporary Book Design* is a handsome example of typography, a delight to read and to own.—*John David Marshall, Clemson College Library.*

## Physics Literature

*Physics Literature: A Reference Manual.* By Robert H. Whitford. Washington, D.C., The Scarecrow Press, 1954. 228 p. \$5.00.

The appearance of this guide to the vast amount of reading matter and the complex publishing pattern of physical science literature will be welcomed by the librarians and students at the college level at which it is aimed. *Physics Literature* is a survey of literature, arranged by "most usual lines of inquiry termed 'approaches'". Eight major approaches are outlined (bibliographical, historical, biographical, experimental, mathematical, educational, terminological, and topical) and the most useful titles in furnishing helpful guidance and a basic collection are listed.

This survey will immediately be suspected of being a rival to Nathan Parke's *Guide to the Literature of Mathematics and Physics* . . . published in 1947. These books are only rivals in part. Parke's work is largely a selected list of the outstanding treatises on various subjects arranged alphabetically by topic. The topical listing, however, is only one of many approaches used by Whitford to develop his guides to the literature of the various phases of physics. Although Parke lists more titles, from 30 to 40% of the titles listed in Whitford's topical section were published after 1947 and thus do not appear in Parke's guide. Parke's excellent discussion of study methods and literature searching, and his more detailed subject listing, and Whitford's carefully analyzed approaches and more recent titles are more complementary than competitive.

Dr. Whitford used a number of criteria to cull out the most useful titles to physicists. By the same criteria, his own book would also be included. *Physics Literature* will un-