

ment," by Velma Veneziano and James S. Aagaard; and "The Economics of Computer Output Media," by S. Michael Malinconico.

All of the papers are well written and supported with details, both technical and cost related to the topics that the authors are addressing, with the exception of Kilgour's, which is really an introductory or keynote paper meant to set the scene for the following presentations. In this reviewer's opinion Ross' paper, based on the experiences at Cornell University, is one of the best specific case examples to be found in the literature addressing this topic. His statement that "bigger and better computers do not mean lower production costs" not only is presently true but increasingly will be the case as improved-performance, lower cost hardware/software systems become more prevalent. Thorson's paper on costs and experiences at Ohio State University shows that circulation automation, while an expensive undertaking in development, conversion, and operation, has considerable service benefits which offset these costs.

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.*

Painter, George D. *William Caxton: A Biography*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977. 227p. \$14.95. LC 76-41134. ISBN 0-399-11888-8.

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

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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

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Must one be *Voyante extralucide* or be super clairvoyant to find a personal name in 'The New York Times Index'?

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