

history of the book.—Susan G. Swartzburg, *Rutgers University Library, New Brunswick, New Jersey*.

Wright, H. Curtis. ***The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship***. Foreword by Jesse H. Shera. Afterword by H. J. de Vleeschauwer. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Univ. Pr., 1977. 237p. \$19.95. LC 77-73645. ISBN 0-8425-0623-3.

Librarians should not be deterred by the nondescript title, especially since so little scholarly research exists on the historical roots of the profession. *The Oral Antecedents of Greek Librarianship* seeks to fill a significant gap in the literature of librarianship. Wright attempts to deal with the antecedents of the Alexandrian library movement by focusing on the transition of classical civilization from an oral to a written tradition. Here, the author believes, can be found the origins of the library. This hypothesis is intriguing and entitles Wright to take his reader on a historical journey that recounts the function of information in classical society from preliterate times to classical Greece.

On the way, he introduces several unusual observations, some of which relate directly to his theme, others of which digress from it. One strong observation compares Homer to the librarian in terms of the information function of each within their societies—a unique argument that is well defended. Another observation of considerable merit details the heavy influence Oriental bibliographic methodology had on the Greeks. A third observation, however, involves Wright's defense of the "inventorist" against the "evolutionist" theory of writing. This one makes for a nice story, but hardly worth the lengthy effort in terms of his theme.

Of particular concern to this reviewer is Wright's heavy reliance on a few secondary sources, especially the works of S. H. Butcher, Rudolph Pfeiffer, and Chester G. Starr. It is obvious the author bought the ideas of all three, but his hopes that lengthy quotes from their works will serve to convince his own readers fall short of their mark. This is especially true for chapter Four, where Pfeiffer is referred to or quoted in nearly half the 246 footnotes.

The writing style is frequently burden-

some (especially in chapter One, "The Metaphysics of Information"), and the organization occasionally loose. Shera's Foreword is good, but de Vleeschauwer's essay has already appeared in *Toward a Theory of Librarianship: Papers in Honor of Jesse Hauk Shera*, edited by Conrad Rawski (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1973). Taken together, the Foreword, Afterword, and text cover the subject; but a definitive study awaits the scholar who will put more stock in primary sources and be less influenced by second-party interpretations.—Wayne A. Wiegand, *College of Library Science, University of Kentucky*.

Kehr, Wolfgang; Neubauer, Karl Wilhelm; and Stoltzenburg, Joachim, eds. ***Zur Theorie und Praxis des modernen Bibliothekswesens***. München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1976. 3v. DM 160. LC 77-463478.

German librarianship, like its counterpart in the United States, has undergone a decade and a half of rapid growth and change. This handbook represents an attempt to inform German librarians and educators of new theory and practice, organizational reforms, and new technology in the library profession. In translation its title reads *On the Theory and Practice of Modern Librarianship*; and its three volumes treat social aspects, technological aspects, and administrative aspects.

The editors, exercising the principle of "limited variety," have compiled three volumes of essays on the state of the art—recent developments, current problems, and future trends in German librarianship and, where appropriate, have included information about librarianship in other countries as well.

Written by noted German librarians and educators, these essays provide a wealth of current information on such topics as public relations, research in library use, library instruction, professional image and education, electronic data processing developments, automation of technical processes, audiovisual media, library building planning, cost-effectiveness studies, management theory, personal leadership styles, and library statistics in German public and research libraries.

Though some unevenness of style and