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Books as History: The Importance of Books Beyond Their Texts

“These are solid, useful pieces of work, and anyone teaching a basic course in book history or an introduction to curatorship will want to consider them for their students. The most interesting section of the book is its concluding ‘case study,’ where Pearson examines five copies of the same text and illustrates the multiple ways in which each copy differs from its mates. Pearson has a keen eye for the telling detail, and students of book history coming to their subject for the first time here will find a marvelous introduction to the art of paying attention.”—Michael Ryan, *Bibliographical Society of America*

“I have just read with enjoyment David Pearson’s finely produced *Books as History*. The treatment is pragmatic and more quickly reaches for examples and illustrations than for theory or historical context. When done, I found myself wishing for more.”—Lorcan Dempsey’s blog

“The whole effort is richly illustrated with the kind of superlative examples that one might imagine at the command of a London bookman at the top of his game. *Books as History* is an absolute must for all libraries supporting information science or the study of book history. Schools with strong liberal arts programs will want to add this to their collections as well.”—P.L. Holmer, Southern Connecticut State University, *CHOICE*

“A...beautifully produced volume... he knows what he’s talking about, and finds some gems to illustrate the many points he has to make. ...it should certainly be on the preservation list. I’ll be thinking about it for a while; I’ve barely touched on its contents. And when I mentioned, by the way, that it’s beautifully produced, that was an understatement. Page after page, it’s gorgeous. Long live books.”—Mick Herron, Oxford, *BOOKDEALER*

“This is a handsomely produced book... it is an extremely accessible, compact and cleverly illustrated introduction to the historical study of the book as a cultural and physical object, and, unfussily, imparts a basic grasp of the techniques of bibliographical analysis, which can be forbiddingly technical.”—John Barnard, *TLS*

“David Pearson’s new book sets out to make librarians and others who have books in their care think again about their value as cultural artefacts and pieces of historical evidence, especially at this moment in history when they are beginning to lose their primary role as repositories of the world’s knowledge.

“Books as History introduces readers to some of the many ways that books can speak to people beyond their texts. Chapters are devoted to design, production, ownership, binding, and library collections. Books as History is an absolute must for all libraries supporting information science or the study of book history.”—P.L. Holmer

“It is a beautiful object in itself, well designed and printed to the highest modern standards. Pearson concludes his argument by arguing his readers to 'write your thoughts in the margin of this copy-if it is yours to write in- and turn it into a unique object for prosperity.' Despite Pearson's exhortation, I won't be able to bring myself to deface this lovely book with my malformed scribble.”—Gillian Dooley

“The beauty of David Pearson’s Books as History: The Importance of Books Beyond Their Texts is its combination of overwhelming visual evidence and compelling prose arguments. Stellar illustrations.”—Consuela Metzger

“A joy to read.” —Jane Wickendal, *Rare Books Newsletter*

“A beautifully produced book.” —*Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*