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The Care of Books

John Willis Clark, a noted academic and antiquarian, published this book in 1901 after completing his work on the architectural history of Cambridge. His carefully researched study (Clark personally visited and measured every building he described, and drew many of the illustrations), provides a wide-ranging account of the history of libraries from antiquity to the early modern period. Clark describes the buildings used to store books: churches, cloisters, and purpose-built libraries; the way collections were endowed, audited and protected; the development of library furniture, including lecterns, stalls, chaining systems and wall-cases; and the characteristics of monastic, collegiate, and private collections. The book is generously illustrated, and its approachable style means it will appeal not only to academic historians of libraries, but to a wider audience of those interested in books and reading culture, historic buildings and artefacts, and medieval, renaissance and early modern studies.

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The Care of Books

*An Essay on the Development of Libraries and
their Fittings, from the Earliest Times to the
End of the Eighteenth Century*

JOHN WILLIS CLARK



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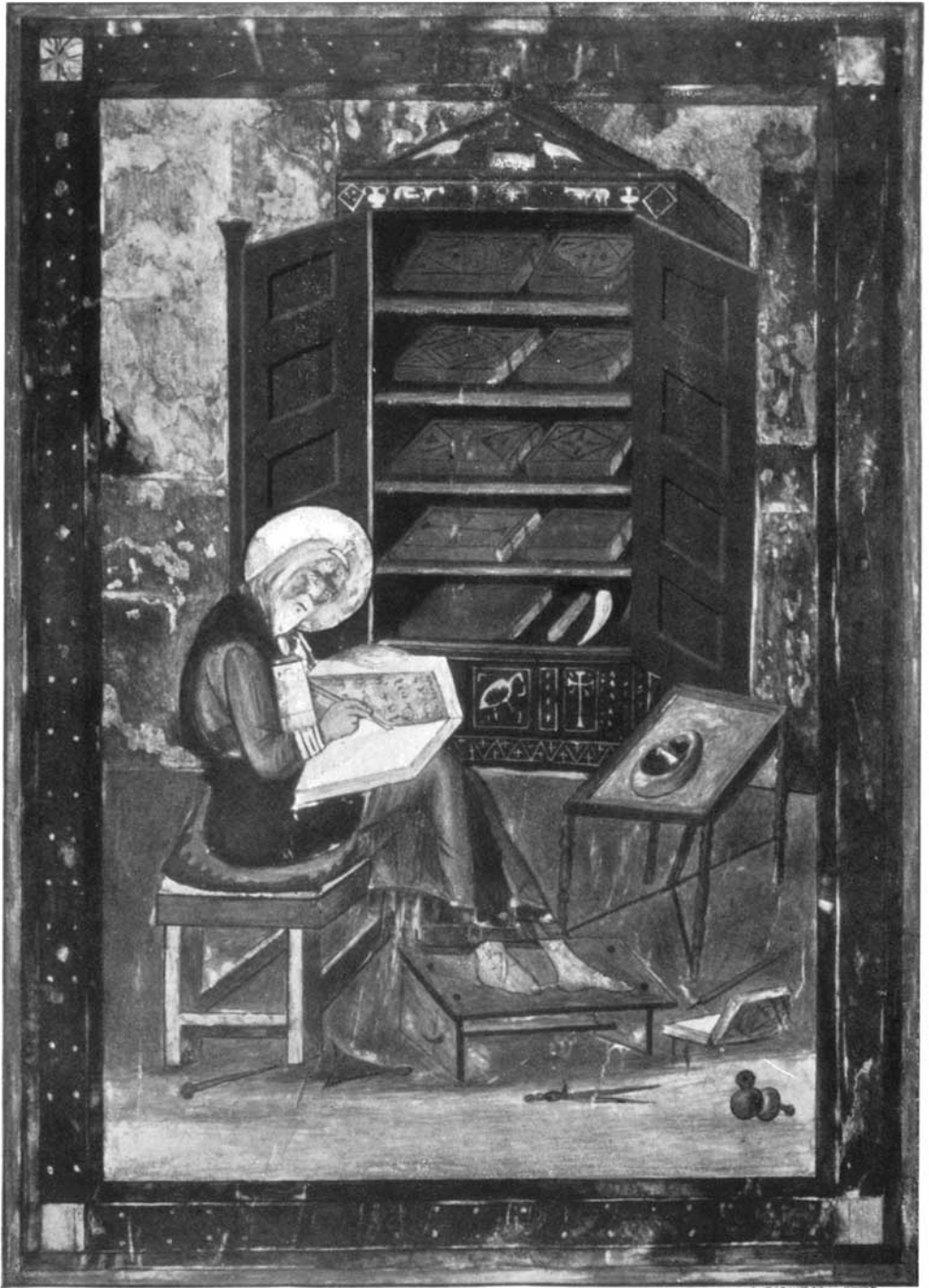


Fig. 15. EZRA WRITING THE LAW.

Frontispiece to the *Codex Amiatinus*.

In the background is a press with open doors. The picture was probably drawn in the middle of the sixth century A.D.

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THE CARE OF BOOKS

An Essay on the
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the end of the Eighteenth Century

By

JOHN WILLIS CLARK,
M.A., HON. LITT.D. (OXF.), F.S.A.

Registrary of the University
and formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge

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FRANCISCO AIDANO GASQUET
MONACHO BENEDICTINO
D.D.
MAGISTRO DISCIPULUS

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



WHEN engaged in editing and completing *The Architectural History of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, I devoted much time and attention to the essay called *The Library*. The subject was entirely new ; and the more I looked into it, the more convinced did I become that it would well repay fuller investigation than was then possible. For instance, I felt certain that the Customs affecting monastic libraries would, if one could only discover them, throw considerable light on collegiate statutes relating to the same subject.

The *Architectural History* having been published, I had leisure to study libraries from my new point of view ; and, while thus engaged, I fortunately met with the admirable paper by Dom Gasquet which he modestly calls *Some Notes on Medieval Monastic Libraries*. This brief essay—it occupies only 20 pages—opened my eyes to the possibilities that lay before me, and I gladly place on record here the debt I owe to the historian to whom I have dedicated this book.

When I had the honour of delivering the Rede Lecture before the University of Cambridge in June 1894, I attempted a reconstruction of the monastic library, shewing its relationship, through its fittings, to

the collegiate libraries of Oxford and Cambridge ; and I was also able, following the example set by Dom Gasquet in the above-mentioned essay, to indicate the value of illuminated manuscripts as illustrating the life of a medieval student or scribe. In my lectures as Sandars Reader in Bibliography, delivered before the University of Cambridge in 1900, I developed the subject still further, extending the scope of my enquiries so as to include the libraries of Greece and Rome.

In writing my present book I have availed myself freely of the three works above mentioned. At the same time I have incorporated much fresh material ; and I am glad to take this opportunity of stating, that, with the single exception of the Escorial, I have personally examined and measured every building which I have had occasion to describe ; and many of the illustrations are from my own sketches.

I call my book an *Essay*, because I wish to indicate that it is only an attempt to deal, in a summary fashion, with an extremely wide and interesting subject—a subject, too, which might easily be subdivided into separate heads each capable of more elaborate treatment. For instance, with regard to libraries in Religious Houses, I hope to see a book written, dealing not merely with the way in which the books were cared for, but with the subjects most generally studied, as indicated to us by the catalogues which have survived.

A research such as I have had to undertake has naturally involved the co-operation of numerous librarians and others both in England and on the Continent. From all these officials I have experienced unflinching courtesy and kindness, and I beg them to accept this collective

expression of my gratitude. To some, however, I am under such particular obligations, that I wish to mention them by name.

In the first place I have to thank my friends Dr Jackson of Trinity College, Dr Sandys of S. John's College, Dr James of King's College, and F. J. H. Jenkinson, M.A., University Librarian, for their kind help in reading proofs and making suggestions. Dr Sandys devoted much time to the revision of the first chapter. As my work deals largely with monastic institutions it is almost needless to say that I have consulted and received efficient help from my old friend W. H. St John Hope, M.A., Assistant Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries.

My researches in Rome were made easy to me by the unflinching kindness and ready help accorded on every occasion by Father C. J. Ehrle, S.J., Prefect of the Vatican Library. My best thanks are also due to Signor Rodolfo Lanciani, to Professor Petersen of the German Archeological Institute, Rome, and to Signor Guido Biagi of the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence. At Milan Monsignor Ceriani of the Ambrosian Library was so kind as to have the library photographed for my use.

The courteous officials who administer the great libraries of Paris with so much ability, have assisted me in all my researches. I wish specially to thank in this place M. Léopold Delisle and M. Léon Dorez of the Bibliothèque Nationale; M. A. Franklin of the Bibliothèque Mazarine; M. H. Martin of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; and M. A. Peraté, Sous-Conservateur du Château de Versailles.

I have also to thank Señor Ricardo Velasquez for his beautiful elevation of the bookcases in the Escorial Library; Father J. van den Gheyn, S.J., of the Royal Library, Brussels, for his trouble in shewing me, and allowing me to have photographed, several MSS. from the library under his charge; my friends Mr T. G. Jackson, R.A., Architect, for lending me his section of Bishop Cobham's library at Oxford; E. W. B. Nicholson, M.A., Librarian, and Falconer Madan, M.A., Sub-Librarian, in the Bodleian Library, for information respecting the building and its contents; Mr F. E. Bickley of the British Museum for much help in finding and examining MSS.; and Lionel Cust, M.A., Director of the National Portrait Gallery, for general direction and encouragement.

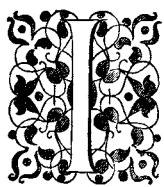
Messrs Macmillan have allowed me to use three illustrations which appear in the first chapter; Mr Murray has given the same permission for the woodcut of the carrells at Gloucester; and Messrs Blades for the representation of James Leaver's book-press.

Lastly I wish to thank the staff of the University Press for using their best efforts to produce the work rapidly and well, and for many acts of personal kindness to myself.

JOHN WILLIS CLARK.

SCROOPE HOUSE,
CAMBRIDGE,
September 23rd, 1901.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

N preparing a second edition of *The Care of Books* I have made no important alterations or additions. As a general rule I have contented myself with a revision of the text ; but in some places, as for instance in the account of the library at Titchfield Priory, I have made a longer quotation from the authority laid under contribution. I have also added eight new illustrations.

I should be indeed hard to please if I were not gratified by the kind and cordial tone of the numerous criticisms which have been written on my essay, both by Englishmen and by foreigners. On three questions, however, raised in more than one article, I wish to say a few words. I have been found fault with (1) because many celebrated libraries are passed over by me in silence ; (2) because I have not selected illustrations of desks and other library-appliances from printed books as well as from MSS. ; and (3) because, though I state on my title-page that the period covered by my essay extends to the end of the eighteenth century, my last illustration represents Dean Boys, who died in 1625.

C. L.

b

To the first count in this indictment I reply that I have intentionally cited those libraries only which contribute some new fact to the tale of the gradual development of book-preservation. The fame of a library, or the number and value of the books contained in it, does not affect my argument. As regards the illustrations to be found in early printed books I have carefully examined several such works, as for instance *La Mer des Histoires*, and reproductions of them. These illustrations taught me nothing new; and they seemed to me to be copies, not always either faithful or successful, of pieces of furniture far better shewn in manuscripts. In this edition, however, I have figured a book-marker from an edition of Horace printed at Strassburg in 1498.

To the critic who charges me with non-fulfilment of my promise as to the length of the period covered by my researches, I am tempted to suggest that he has turned in his haste to the end of the last chapter instead of to the end of the last but one, where I describe the works of Sir Christopher Wren, and point out in what way library-fittings were modified through his influence. The last chapter is intended to be of the nature of a supplement, dealing with private libraries as the previous pages did with public.

JOHN WILLIS CLARK.

SCROOPE HOUSE,
CAMBRIDGE,
August, 1902.

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