qui donnent ici accès aux coulisses de leur travail, la biographie est présentée comme un récit qui demeure *ouvert*, auquel d'autres récits biographiques pourront venir se greffer afin de proposer « une nouvelle vision », comme l'explique François Ricard dans « Notes d'un praticien », « qui ne discréditera pas nécessairement la mienne [...], mais qui s'y ajoutera, la modulera, entrera en dialogue avec elle et relancera encore une fois l'interrogation ». Bernard Andrès abonde un peu dans le même sens lorsqu'il se penche sur la part d'*invention* et d'*imagination* propres au travail biographique. Le biographe, estime-t-il dans « Genèse d'une biographie romancée : l'énigme de Sales Laterrière », ne peut prétendre à une fidélité exemplaire par rapport aux événements qui ont composé la vie du personnage; il y a construction de l'objet – une construction possible parmi d'autres – à partir de tous les matériaux qui sont mis à sa disposition.

L'intérêt de *Approches de la biographie au Québec* réside surtout dans les réflexions fondées sur des *études de cas* qui y sont proposées. Les directeurs de publication ont par ailleurs le mérite d'avoir réuni des collaborateurs commentant des objets variés. L'ouvrage se destine surtout au chercheur et à l'étudiant universitaires en littérature, mais pourrait aussi se révéler utile à toute personne oeuvrant dans un autre domaine qui songerait à se lancer dans l'entreprise biographique.

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Nicole Howard. *The Book: The Life Story of a Technology*, Greenwood Technographies. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005. xvi, 171 pp. US \$45.00. ISBN: 031333028X.

The growing interest in book history and print culture is attracting increasingly large numbers of students, general readers, and specialists from other areas with little or no background in the discipline. A need has clearly emerged for introductory texts, syntheses, and overviews that will quickly and easily inculcate people into the main elements of book/print studies. With this latest volume in the Greenwood Technographies series, such a book has been produced. Written by Nicole Howard, Assistant Professor of History, Hayward State University, California, in a clear and straightforward manner, the work provides a brief and effective introduction to three thousand years of book history from 800 BC.

Although lightly footnoted, the study is based upon solid scholarship and divided into six chapters: (i) Ancestors: books before print; (ii) Infancy: the earliest printed books; (iii) Youth: books in the sixteenth century; (iv) Adulthood: early modern books; (v) Maturity: books in the age of automation; and (vi) The future of books: twentieth century and beyond. The first chapter is rather cursory in its treatment of the ancient and medieval worlds – satisfactory for those needing only a basic introduction, but unsatisfactory for those looking for in-depth study of early writing systems. With chapter two the author hits her stride and provides an excellent introduction to the social and technical issues surrounding Gutenberg and the introduction of the printing press. Chapter three handles well the tumultuous 16th century: Protestant Reformation, changing markets, design, technology, and overseas spread of printing. The next two chapters deal with the evolving scene of the past three centuries: interaction of technology, business, intellectual activity, and mass literacy. The final chapter deals with the future of books in our electronic age.

One of the great strengths of this work is how breadth and depth are provided through coverage of specific topics. With admirable clarity and succinctness, they are integrated into the narrative with minimal use of technical language, thereby increasing greatly the book's value. Among the topics so handled are the following: colophons, copyright, e-books, frisket, hand composition, incunabula, ink, lithography, matrix, offset printing, papermaking, parchment, rotary presses, and wooden hand presses. Among individual names with detailed coverage are William Blake, Benjamin Franklin, Gutenberg, Martin Luther, Aldus Manutius, Christophe Plantin, and Lord Stanhope.

On the whole, the generalities are well handled and avoid controversial ideological positions. There is, however, a metropolitan Amer-Eurocentricity that some will find annoying. Canada, like the rest of the world, is consigned to a vast unacknowledged hinterland. That said, by concentrating upon the major mainstream elements of book/print culture this study provides a helpful context that will be greatly appreciated by neophyte students, lecturers, and researchers. Even those with great experience in the field may appreciate the opportunity of returning to first principles.

The book begins with a useful timeline and ends with a glossary of terms, bibliography, and index. Each chapter contains black-and-white illustrations.

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