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The Library: A World History

James W. P. Campbell
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James W. P. Campbell : The Library: A World History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Library: A World History:

46 of 47 people found the following review helpful. A gorgeous volume!By George SandSophisticates used to say they bought Playboy to read the articles and paid no attention to the pictures. I bought this book for the opposite reason: to look at the gorgeous pictures of libraries through the years and they are gorgeous!However, I deigned to read a few words of the text, and discovered that it was fascinating and beautifully written, so I read it in detail. While it speaks about libraries, it also treats the various external factors that affected libraries, including their shifting patrons the state, the church, the nobility, the plutocrats, the philanthropists, and the democrats. It also considers the effects of technology the invention of books, paper, movable-type printing, gas lighting, electricity, and computing. Not to mention the evolution of architectural styles from classical to medieval, renaissance, baroque, rococo, neoclassical, Victorian, and modern. And, of course, the incorporation of the fine arts into library design.Although enjoyably readable, the book also includes all the scholarly apparatus necessary for a true student of libraries. Any lover of

books, libraries, or beautiful buildings will delight in this volume. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I was slightly disappointed the focus was so heavy on the buildings--but when ...By Mitch HaileI essentially read this in one sitting (about 14 hours). Initially when I flipped through it, I was slightly disappointed the focus was so heavy on the buildings--but when I got to reading it, I learned quite about about the relationship of the buildings and some of the challenges of preserving books. There's a lot more here than just architecture and there's a lot of great architecture. I learned a lot--this book filled numerous holes of my knowledge and uncovered many new areas to explore. The end notes and bibliography are wonderful as well; enough context to pick and choose next steps, warnings on outdated materials, etc.This book covers libraries in Europe, North America, Asia, and some notes about the Incas, Aztecs and Mayans. I don't recall seeing much (anything?) about modern South America or Australia as I write this review.Anyway, it's a beautiful book. If you're reading these reviews, you should get the book.10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. fantasticBy Tony B.I bought this book as it was offered by another book club I belong to: The Folio Society. It was highly recommended, and they weren't wrong, it is a great book to read and browse. I also have a small library in my house and wanted to improve the look of the book cases (I am also a wood worker) and thought this would provide some wonderful inspiration, and that it did. But the vast number of libraries in the world, nearly all I would never, but would love to, see, is astonishing. A few of them I have seen talked about on various TV shows lately, the History channel for one if memory serves me, and it was also great to see in this book, very old library's that have been in existence for centuries, like one in Turkey since AD 155, although not sure it has books in it any more, or what they used for books back then. Then there is one in South Korea from 1251. Still in use! But one of the things I love the most is the huge libraries, seemingly stories high made of beautiful wood carvings, citing one example: The Library of the Abbey of St. Gall, St. Gallen, Switzerland, 1765. A beautiful book that will keep you enthralled for ages, especially if you are a book lover as well as someone who will get excited over the magnificence of the architecture of libraries, inside and out.

A library is not just a collection of books, but also the buildings that house them. As varied and inventive as the volumes they hold, such buildings can be much more than the dusty, dark wooden shelves found in mystery stories or the catacombs of stacks in the basements of academia. From the great dome of the Library of Congress, to the white faade of the Seinjoki Library in Finland, to the ancient ruins of the library of Pergamum in modern Turkey, the architecture of a library is a symbol of its time as well as of its builders wealth, culture, and learning.

"In a new book, *The Library: A World History*, author James Campbell and photographer Will Pryce survey the world's libraries, from the expansive new National Library of China to the Tripitaka Koreana, which was built in 1251 in South Korea and is one of the oldest intact libraries in the world. The book is full of interesting asides."