



Library: An Unquiet History

Matthew Battles

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On the survival and destruction of knowledge, from Alexandria to the Internet.

Through the ages, libraries have not only accumulated and preserved but also shaped, inspired, and obliterated knowledge. Matthew Battles, a rare books librarian and a gifted narrator, takes us on a spirited foray from Boston to Baghdad, from classical scriptoria to medieval monasteries, from the Vatican to the British Library, from socialist reading rooms and rural home libraries to the Information Age.

He explores how libraries are built and how they are destroyed, from the decay of the great Alexandrian library to scroll burnings in ancient China to the destruction of Aztec books by the Spanish—and in our own time, the burning of libraries in Europe and Bosnia. Encyclopedic in its breadth and novelistic in its telling, this volume will occupy a treasured place on the bookshelf next to Baker's *Double Fold*, Basbanes's *A Gentle Madness*, Manguel's *A History of Reading*, and Winchester's *The Professor and the Madman*. 11 b/w illustrations.

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