**THE FIRST LIBRARIANS OF ALEXANDRIA**

**ZENODOTUS**  
(ca 325 BCE-260 BCE)  
along with being a Greek grammarian and literary critic, was the first librarian at Alexandria as well as the first critical editor of Homer. In addition to other scholarly work, Zenodotus is noted as having introduced an organization system on the materials in the Library of Alexandria. In his system, texts were placed in different rooms based on their subject matter. Then he organized the materials in each room alphabetically by the first letter of the last name of the author, so we have him to thank for our modern day system. Also small tags were attached to each scroll with pertinent information in order for library users easy access to the desired documents. This is considered to be the first use of metadata and therefore a landmark in library history.

**APOLLONIUS OF RHODES**  
(ca 295 BCE-215 BCE)  
was the second librarian of Alexandria but is best known for his epic poem, *Argonautica*, about Jason and the Argonauts and the quest for the Golden Fleece. Only fragments remain of his other poems but the subject matter of those poems indicate writings concerned with establishing new cities such as Alexandria. As a scholar who served the Ptolemies, he sought favor with them by writing such poems. In the past many considered him a imitator of Homer but recent studies have enhanced his stature in history.

**ERATOSTHENES**  
(276 BCE-194 BCE)  
was born in Cyrene (in modern-day Libya) and served as the third chief librarian of the Great Library of Alexandria. He is credited with being the first person to have calculated the circumference of the Earth about 240 BCE.

**Aristophenes of Byzantium**  
(257 BCE-180 BCE)  
was a Greek scholar and grammarian. He is credited with the invention of the Greek accent system to designate pronunciation particularly in older literary works. He also invented one of the first forms of punctuation which were single dots that separated verses and indicated the needed amount of breath to complete various segments of text when reading aloud. This is the origin of the modern comma we know today. Also a lexicographer, he compiled many collections of unusual and archaic words. He studied under Zenodotus and Callimachus. At the age of 60, he succeeded Eratosthenes as head librarian at Alexandria.

**THE CATALOGUER CALLIMACHUS**  
(ca 305 BCE-240 BCE)  
Callimachus’ most famous accomplishment was the Pinakes which was a bibliographical catalogue of the holdings in the libraries in Alexandria. Pinakes is plural for the Greek word pinax which originally means tablet. The word might refer to the tablet that was placed above library cases which denoted the class of literature that the particular rolls contained. Later, we understand that the word refers to a list of authors and works or to a catalogue. While there were two lesser pinax that Callimachus created, the completed translated title of the most famous is *Tables of Those Who Were Outstanding in Every Phase of Culture, and Their Writings-in 120 Books*. Callimachus was a prolific writer and is credited with 800 titles while in scholarly residence at the Mouseion at Alexandria.

**THE CRITIC ARISTARCHUS OF SAMOTHRACE**  
(ca 220 BCE-143 BCE)  
was noted as a grammarian and is considered the most influential scholar of Homeric poetry. He succeeded his teacher Aristophanes of Byzantium in the role of librarian at Alexandria. While applying his teacher’s accent method to the Homeric poems, he established what is considered the most critical edition of those writings. Either he or Zenodotus are believed to have been responsible for separating the Iliad and Odyssey into twenty-four books each. Only fragments remain of the 800 treatises he wrote. By calling someone an aristarch, derived from his name, you are defining that person as a severe critic.