

*The French Book and the European Book World*, by Andrew Pettegree (Leiden: Brill, 2007; pp. xiv + 328. Eur 99).

This excellent and unusually coherent collection of essays communicates some of the discoveries made and insights gained by Andrew Pettegree as he and his team from the University of St Andrews worked on their recently published inventory of sixteenth-century books in French (*French Vernacular Books: Books Published in the French Language before 1601*, ed. A Pettegree, M. Walsby and A. Wilkinson, 2007). Five of the thirteen essays in this collection have never previously appeared in print. Most of the others are quite recent.

After an initial essay sketching the history of the French Bibliothèques Municipales that were so important to the St Andrews project, the bulk of the volume is divided into three sections of four essays apiece. Part One, 'Pamphlets and their readers', contains essays reporting and contextualising some of the most exciting finds made by the St Andrews team. A *recueil factice* of 33 pamphlets discovered in the Bibliothèque Méjanes of Aix-en-Provence, composed primarily of news pamphlets published in Rouen between 1537 and 1544, brought to light a previously unknown 'provincial news community in sixteenth-century France'. It serves as the basis for an essay illustrating the circulation of information about current affairs. The accumulation of new discoveries concerning evangelical or Protestant texts of the middle of the century demonstrated that, while (as was previously well known) Geneva presses overwhelmingly dominated the production of such works between 1539 and 1560, Protestant presses multiplied within France itself to such an extent in 1561 and 1562 that over the subsequent decade more than four out of every five Protestant books in French were published within the kingdom itself. This profusion of Protestant printing in France is examined in three essays: one on the output of three previously unstudied Caen printers in the years 1560–63, one on the Lyon printer Jean Saugrain who specialised in anti-Catholic songs and satires of a verbal violence that went well beyond anything published at Geneva at the time; and one sketching the overall contours of this publishing phenomenon.

Part Two, 'Dissemination', explores the wider European circulation of books. Here again several essays take off from specific documents or discoveries. One analyses the market for books in modern foreign languages—French, especially—on the basis of a 1592 catalogue of all works in vernaculars other than German that had been offered for sale at the Frankfurt book fair since 1568. Another uses the 1567 catalogue of the Emden bookseller Gaspar Staphorst to show how this small East Frisian town briefly became a hub for the international trade in Reformed theological books. Broader studies look at the exchange of texts and information between France and the Netherlands and the translation history of that sixteenth-century best-seller, *Amadis of Gaul*. One small factual correction is required in the essay on 'France and the Netherlands. The Interlocking of Two Religious Cultures in Print during the Era of the Religious Wars': Italian *avvisi* and German *Zeitungen* reporting events of the French civil wars proliferated from the onset of the conflicts rather than simply during the crisis of the League, contrary to what is suggested on page 125.

Part Three, 'Perspectives', focuses chiefly on the relationship between the structure of the book trade in different countries and the dissemination of the Reformation. Here one can see taking shape many of the larger themes that Pettegree further developed in his *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (2005; rev. *ante*, cxxi [2006], 602–4). As he argues most explicitly in an essay written with Matthew Hall, 'The Reformation and the Book. A Reconsideration', it is highly misleading to speak about the importance of print for the dissemination of the Reformation as if the well-studied nexus between the two in Germany were the European norm. On the eve of the Reformation, no other land had as dense yet as decentralised a network of printing presses as did the Holy Roman Empire, nor as many graphic artists. Consequently, no other land could give rise to as rapid a proliferation of illegal vernacular evangelical

propaganda, nor see the first stirrings of reform grow so rapidly into a mass movement for change. In no other land, also, was visual propaganda for the cause likely to become as important. France, for instance, had many fewer graphic artists. Here, in consequence, song would be a far more significant medium for the dissemination of the Reformation than woodcuts and etchings. Of all the major Western European monarchies that ultimately came to be touched by the Reformation, England—the subject of two essays in this section, ‘The Reception of Calvinism in Britain’ and ‘Printing and the Reformation: The English Exception’—stood at the furthest remove from Germany in terms of the industrial structure of its book trades. Its printing industry was not only tiny; it was also concentrated overwhelmingly in London, close to the watchful eyes of the authorities. Consequently, so long as the Crown remained hostile to Protestantism, most vernacular literature favourable to the cause had to be produced outside the country and smuggled into it. This kept down its volume and impact. On putting down this volume, one understands better than ever before why the English Reformation was such a slow reformation from above.

In sum, these essays move in exemplary fashion from specific bibliographic discoveries to general considerations of great importance for understanding the comparative history of the European Reformation. They also frequently allude to still further discoveries made in the course of the research for the St Andrews project, leading one to hope that a full synthetic account of French book production in the sixteenth century, exploiting the cumulative results of that investigation, will soon follow.

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doi:10.1093/ehr/ceq043

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