

Andrew Pettegree. *The Book in the Renaissance*.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. xvi + 421 pp. index. append. illus. tpls. map. bibl. \$40. ISBN: 978-0-300-11009-8.

Andrew Pettegree's new book surveys the economic, social, political, and religious contexts in which printers produced books from the time of Gutenberg to the end of the sixteenth century in Europe. The book is divided into four sections, each dealing with a different chronological period. In the first section, "Beginnings," Pettegree reviews the incunabular period and the challenges it presented to printers despite their enthusiasm for the new technology. He underscores that early printers had to be good businessmen to prevent their print shops from closing. He debunks the romantic image of the printer-scholar, concerned only with the intellectual qualities of his books, and demonstrates how printing was, in reality, one of the first professions to fall victim to capitalism, with a number of bankruptcies. This section also analyzes how printers' conservatism in their selection of titles and the limited clientele of the period led to a saturation of the market at the end of the fifteenth century.

The second part, "Consolidation," concerns the changes that occurred in the first half of the sixteenth century due to the expansion of the international market and the subsequent development of a new print product: the religious pamphlet. Pettegree writes engagingly on the impact of the Reformation on book production. He also explains how the desire for news — raised by travels to the New World, the wars ravaging Europe, and the Ottoman threat — contributed to the printing of innumerable pamphlets. The expansion of the market to new types of literature and schoolbooks is also discussed in this section. In the third part, "Conflict," Pettegree reviews the attitudes of the religious and political authorities toward print in the sixteenth century: their ban of titles published by their enemies but their support of printing enterprises serving their power, and the impact of these decisions on the production and trade of books. Pettegree analyzes the ebb and flow of book production in the major European printing centers as well as the growth of printing in countries far from those centers. The last section, "New World," is a catchall for other subjects: the printing of scientific books, the building of libraries, the secondhand book market, pamphlets on prophecies, and the printing of plays. The book ends with a discussion of Jesuit publishing and Renaissance collectors of cheap prints.

Pettegree's book is well written and will be a useful introduction to readers unfamiliar with the subject. For a more informed audience, this book synthesizes the secondary literature but offers little new information or interpretation.

Inevitably, given a work of this scope, the bibliography omits some recent work, such as Angela Nuovo's book on Italian booksellers. Recent studies on scientific books and scientific illustrations are also missing, including the work of Brian Ogilvie. Pettegree's discussion of the physical characteristics of Renaissance books frequently lacks engagement with the actual objects even though design, typography, and illustration, with their impact on cost and reception, were crucial to the success or failure of a publication. The decision to place the description and the key to the abbreviated terms for the databases the author used to produce his statistics (and to which he frequently refers) in an appendix instead of in a preface is unfortunate since, for example, those who are unaware of what "VD 16" is will not find out until the end of the book. Finally, footnotes to support the major assertions are frequently lacking. These choices, possibly those of the publisher, may have been made to limit the scholarly apparatus of the book.

Nonetheless, Pettegree's book deserves credit for being one of the few works to introduce a non-specialist audience to the multilayered historical circumstances surrounding the production and reception of books in the Renaissance.

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