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THE REFORMATION AND THE BOOK: A RECONSIDERATION

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ABSTRACT. *Perceptions of the role of the book in the Reformation are shaped by our knowledge of the German print world during the first decades of Protestant expansion. All indications point to evangelical domination of the press in the years when Luther first became a public figure, when the printed book undoubtedly played a crucial role in the dissemination of the evangelical message, and printing enjoyed a period of exuberant growth. But it is by no means certain that assumptions derived from this German model hold good for other parts of Europe. This article re-examines the German paradigm of book and Reformation in the light of two recent bibliographical projects. The first, a trial survey of publishing outputs throughout Europe, demonstrates that the different regional print cultures that made up the European book world were organized in radically contrasting ways. These structural differences were highly significant from the point of view of assisting or impeding the output of controversial literature. The lessons from this survey are then applied to an individual case study, France, which, it emerges, deviated from the German model in almost every particular. Together these two sets of data force us to call into question the natural affinity between print and Protestantism suggested by the German paradigm.*

There can be little doubt that the book was one of the great forces for change in sixteenth-century Europe. And at the centre of this lay the Reformation. The connection between the book and the Reformation seems so obvious that it needs little extra comment. The powerful impetus given to the spread of the new doctrines by the medium of print was widely recognized in its own day – indeed, part of Luther's great genius as a reformer was his speedy recognition of the power of the printed word to carry on his fight with the papacy and articulate his theological precepts. Early critics within the church were first scandalized and then alarmed by Luther's blatant courting of a broad public through printed tracts and sermons. The connection between the book and the Reformation – in their eyes a malign one – was immediately obvious. And it has continued to be a cornerstone of historical interpretation from that day to this.[1]

It is not our intention in this reconsideration of these issues to offer any analysis that would deny this relationship – that is simply not possible. The evidence for the impact of the book on the Reformation (and perhaps less obviously, the

[1] As an introduction to this enormous literature, Mark J. Edwards, *Printing, propaganda and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, 1994); Jean-François Gilmont, ed., *The Reformation and the book*, trans. Karin Maag (Aldershot, 1998).

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impact of the Reformation on the book) is too overwhelming. But it is certainly possible to suggest that our broadest assumptions regarding the natural affinity between the evangelical movement and the medium of print are susceptible of some refinement. Here, based on a survey of the print world that extends beyond the immediate context of Luther's challenge to embrace the broader print culture of sixteenth-century Europe, we hope to offer some observations that will at least place the relationship between the book and the Reformation in a slightly different context.[2]

This is important, because when we approach the question of the role of the book in the Reformation our assumptions regarding that relationship are based almost exclusively on analysis of the first decade, when Luther's message became a movement, and when the output of religious pamphlets in Germany was at its height. When we turn to other countries that experienced a successful or less successful Reformation we tend to carry these assumptions with us: that the book necessarily functioned as an agent of change and on the side of the critics of the old church. Our knowledge of the pamphlet wars of the 1520s also indelibly shapes our assumption of what was necessary, in printing terms, for a successful mass movement. We know that Luther's arguments quickly touched a nerve with a broad German public; and that printers in a large number of German cities easily seized on the opportunities presented by the resulting controversies to enter the market for vernacular *Flugschriften*. Yet it is by no means certain that assumptions developed through analysis of the first German decade can hold true for the Reformation elsewhere. Different parts of the European book market operated in quite different ways. Some lacked the industrial infrastructure either to service or to inspire a broad public debate – even if that had been their wish.

These are important issues, if not always fully acknowledged in discussions of the play of ideas during the Renaissance and Reformation period. In our admiration for the genius of Luther, our recognition of the eloquent skills of those who took up his teachings, and those who (often with considerable courage) took up their pens to refute him, we sometimes forget that a text is not an autonomous object that simply finds its own readers. In the craft world of medieval Europe, from which the book industry had so recently emerged, nothing, in fact, could be farther from the truth. The manufacture, distribution, and marketing of the printed word was as much an industrial as an intellectual process. Behind every Erasmus, or Luther, lay a small army of brawny artisans, who did hard, demanding work to turn an idea into an artefact. In the printing shops there were typesetters, pressmen, and proofreaders, and behind them lay the typefounders in their foundry, not to mention the papermakers in their mills. And that was just to produce the sheets that made up the finished book. Between Luther and his

[2] The responsibility of the two authors can be further specified as follows. The raw data and the initial analysis of the study from the *Index Aureliensis* in section II of this paper are the responsibility of Matthew Hall. The two other sections and the overall interpretative framework are the work of Andrew Pettegree.

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readers lay another small army of merchants, booksellers, and bookbinders – and as the trade spread through Europe, another small army of boatmen, hauliers, and travelling salesmen came into play, to spread the message to its new readers.

Here I want to apply some of the insights that flow from the study of the book as an industrial product rather than simply as an intellectual process. This is a relatively new aspect of the discipline but in our view an urgent necessity, particularly in an age like our own when we simply assume the dominance of text-based information systems. If, at the same time, we broaden the scope of our investigation from Luther's Germany to other parts of the European world of print, we will see that the conditions for the successful conduct of such a business were not equally available in different parts of Europe – in fact, the dynamics of the book industry varied very markedly from country to country. This had the most profound implications for the likely success of a Reformation movement in different parts of the western Christian world.

I

First, however, let us turn our attention back to the Reformation heartland – the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire – and review briefly the dynamic of publishing in the first crucial years of Luther's movement. Here we see that the role of the printed book, particularly in the relatively new form of the pamphlet, was absolutely paramount in first creating public interest in the controversies surrounding Luther, then in moulding a coherent movement that looked to the Wittenberg reformer for inspiration and leadership. Contemporaries were well aware that in harnessing the previously rather formal, stolid world of the book to serve these ends evangelical critics of the church had achieved something fundamentally new. A new form of book, the *Flugschriften*, came rapidly to dominate the output of German print shops.[3] Demand for books expanded very rapidly after 1517, as religious debate engaged the interest of a new, largely non-clerical audience. An exceptionally high proportion of these books addressed the new controversies: and in Luther, a writer of genius and extraordinary facility, Germany's publishers had found their ideal partner. Luther could write with phenomenal speed and quickly developed an extraordinary range, from the homiletic sermon, through excoriating satire, to careful, systematic exposition of complex theological issues.[4]

For a man in middle age, already twenty years into a successful and conventional career as preacher and theologian, this discovery of a popular voice was a quite extraordinary event; and one that truly shaped the Reformation. It also made fortunes for many in the book world. Those who were fortunate enough to be running the modest print shops of Wittenberg and Leipzig before 1517 were

[3] Hans-Joachim Köhler, ed., *Fluschriften als Massenmedium des Reformationszeit* (Stuttgart, 1981).

[4] The statistically dominant role of Luther in these years is demonstrated in the statistical analysis in Edwards, *Printing, propaganda*, pp. 14–40.

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among the first to benefit; but they soon had to defend their profits against other eager entrepreneurs for whom the evidence of the phenomenal public interest in Luther spelt obvious opportunity. In ten years Wittenberg was transformed from a small outpost of the publishing world to one of the pillars of the German print industry: the lure of Luther's Gospel preaching brought not only students and intellectual disciples to the small Saxon town, but merchant entrepreneurs eager to share in the profits of bringing Luther's words to a wider public. They in turn recruited experienced artisans to man the new and expanding print shops; the wily Lucas Cranach was on hand to supply the woodcuts that provided the Wittenberg *Flugschriften* with their distinctive decorated title-pages.[5] From the point of view of a new entrepreneurial industry, the *Flugschriften* were the ideal product: generally short, they were quick and simple to produce. Because of the high demand (and many of Luther's own writings went through multiple editions in the years immediately after their publication) they turned a far more rapid profit than was usual in the slow-moving world of the book, where classical and patristic editions might take some years to sell out. The profits flowing back to the Wittenberg print shops (though not to Luther) allowed the grateful publishers to embark on more ambitious projects, such as Luther's new Bible translation. Here, the level of investment required to turn out a long, complex book in the traditional folio format was very considerable: a book of this scale might be several months in the press, and required considerable investment capital to purchase paper and pay wages before there was any prospect of return. But even here the courageous entrepreneurs were well rewarded, as the Luther Bible became one of the publishing sensations of the century.[6] The experience of Wittenberg, where fortunes were made, was replicated on a smaller scale in other parts of the German Empire where more established print industries adapted their output to share in the profits of Luther's popularity: in Strasbourg, for instance, and in Basle.[7]

The tremendous energy of the German print industry in the 1520s is now rather taken for granted, though at the time it required a shift of orientation in the rather conservative world of German urban craft industry that was really rather remarkable: a plausible analogy might be the expansion of armaments production in the mid-twentieth century as the industrial powers of Europe shifted to a war footing. Within a few years those involved in the German publishing trades found the capital, cast the new type, milled and supplied the paper, commandeered warehouse space and bookshops, and developed the distribution network to service an entirely new readership. Their success in this extraordinary business operation made possible the exposition of Luther's teachings to a hugely enlarged public: in the process it completely reshaped the world of the book, in Germany at least.

[5] *Cranach im Detail: Buchschmuck Lucas Cranachs des Älteren und seiner Werkstatt* (Wittenberg, 1994).

[6] Heimo Reinitzer, ed., *Biblia deutsch: Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition* (Wolfenbüttel, 1983).

[7] Miriam Usher Chrisman, *Bibliography of Strasbourg imprints, 1480–1599* (Yale, 1982); idem, *Conflicting visions of reform: German lay propaganda pamphlets, 1519–1530* (Boston, MA, 1996).

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The experience of the German book world in the 1520s would not in fact prove to be archetypal for Europe as a whole: this burst of intellectual energy and business creativity would not be widely replicated in other parts of Europe, for all that the religious stirs in Germany excited both curiosity and controversy. But the experience of Germany in the first years after Luther's defiant exposition of a radical theology of dissent has inevitably been the subject of a great deal of scholarly analysis, with the role of print well to the fore. This analysis, conducted not least on the basis of a thorough enumeration and analysis of the *Flugschriften*, has repeatedly highlighted several aspects of the Reformation print controversies, and this complex of issues had in effect become the paradigm for our understanding of the relationship between print and Reformation. The principal features of this understanding, what we may call the German paradigm, are as follows:

- evangelical dominance of print
- rapid spread of print to multiple printing centres; popular texts spread by local reprints
- difficulty of control assisting spread of dissident ideas
- victory of vernacular over Latin
- importance of illustration in spreading message to the non-literate.

All of these features of the movement are clearly a part of the German Reformation experience, particularly in the ten crucial years that followed Luther's first articulation of his theses on indulgences. In recent years a great deal of detailed work has refined our understanding of the conflict of print in these early years. It is now widely recognized that Catholic authors were not unaware of the need to challenge Luther – and did so, on occasions, with wit and style.[8] But there was still an enormous imbalance between evangelicals and defenders of the old church in their access to print.[9] This was partly because of undoubted misgivings among supporters of the old church about the appropriateness of wide public debate on theological issues, but mostly because of market demand. All statistical analysis undertaken demonstrates the extent to which Luther and his allies dominated – one might almost say swamped – the book market in Germany between 1520 and 1526. The demand for Luther's writings was apparently inexhaustible, and swiftly came also to embrace those who took up their pens to support the Wittenberg reformer. This body of writings is impressive both for its sheer extent, and for its variety: sermons, satirical tracts, dialogues, and manifestos for reform all vied for the interest of the discerning purchaser.

The same can be said of other aspects of the paradigm set out above. The Wittenberg printers enjoyed the priceless privilege of having first access to

[8] David V. N. Bagchi, *Luther's earliest opponents: Catholic controversialists, 1518–1525* (Minneapolis, 1991); Frank Aurich, *Die Anfänge des Buchdrucks in Dresden: Die Emserpresse, 1524–1526* (Dresden, 2000).

[9] Mark U. Edwards, 'Catholic controversial literature, 1518–1555: some statistics', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 79 (1888), pp. 189–205.

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Luther's new writings, but they could not control reprints in other parts of the extended network of the German cities where interest in the Reformation proved so intense. With small texts for which there was very heavy demand, market factors spoke strongly for quick, local reprints, rather than transporting large quantities of copies from a single production centre – and this is what occurred. The complexity of political jurisdiction in the patchwork of secular and ecclesiastical territories and Imperial Free cities would in any case have made the enforcement of copyright a forlorn hope; equally it rendered hopeless the attempt by Charles V and others to restrict expressions of support for the Reformation. The print trade had, until this point, been as well controlled as many other new or experimental technologies in the European craft world, not least to protect the interests of investors. It is in this respect a fallacy to regard censorship as a force imposed by government on an unwilling industry – most demand for control came from within the industry itself. But in the era of the Reformation, the print world of the Empire escaped this apparatus of control. The combination of market forces and Germany's particular political make-up made effective control of output impossible.

The Reformation also witnessed a significant development in the emergence of new sorts of vernacular print. Books in the vernacular were of course a familiar feature of the first age of print (1470–1520), and many lay people possessed some books. But the Reformation was the first real challenge to the dominance of Latin in several critical genres: theology, Biblical and critical scholarship, and history. When contemporaries remarked – often with regret and alarm – on the new phenomenon of books that mixed satire, invective, and teaching in a powerful (or poisonous) cocktail in the common tongue of the laity, they were, as so often, correct to identify a fundamental change in the terms of religious debate. The disadvantage Luther's opponents were under was reinforced by their reluctance to be seen to endorse this change by trading arguments and insults in the common tongue. Soon though, satire moved beyond words to scabrous illustrations and broadsheets that mixed text and picture; meanwhile Luther's image was promoted in multiple woodcuts that emphasized the dignity and simplicity of the learned monk.[10] Whether these images played a real role in spreading the ideas of the Reformation to parts of the population that did not read is less certain – though it is frequently asserted that woodcuts did act as the crucial link in the chain that spread the Reformation message across a broad mass of the population.[11]

So our understanding of the relationship between the book and the Reformation is based on solid foundations. The difficulty emerges when we treat this analysis of the impact of print in the particular context of Germany in the 1520s as normative for the experience of Reformation in other European lands.

[10] Martin Warnke, *Cranachs Luther: Entwürfe für ein Image* (Frankfurt, 1984).

[11] Robert W. Scribner, *For the sake of simple folk: popular propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981).

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II

We propose to develop this argument by introducing material derived from a general survey of European print culture based on an analysis of some 10,000 consecutive entries from the *Index Aureliensis*. The *Index Aureliensis* was a project initiated in the 1960s as an attempt at a global survey of sixteenth-century printed books. It lists all books known to the editors, wherever printed, ordered alphabetically by author. The project made slow progress, and in forty years has advanced only as far as the letter G. The list seems to have been compiled through a process of conflating largely familiar library catalogues, such as the printed catalogue of the British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The records do not seem to have been refined by examination of copies to distinguish different editions or states; nor has the list been enhanced by incorporation of records from manuscript catalogues. It is in consequence very incomplete and has to some extent been superseded by more recent, systematic projects such as the *VD16* for Germany and the *Typographia Batava* and *Belgica Typographia* for the Low countries.

The *Index Aureliensis* is manifestly a bibliographical project of a different, pre-digital age; in the third section of this article we will introduce some more refined data from a more modern national bibliographical project (for France) which does make extensive use of more modern on-line resources. But for all its faults the *Index Aureliensis* remains the only project that attempts a global survey of all European print; for that reason it remains useful for precisely the sort of sampling that has been attempted here.

Some years ago one of the authors, Matthew Hall, entered into a rudimentary database a sequence of 10,000 entries from the *Index Aureliensis*. He then analysed this data according to a variety of criteria: language, format, date, and place of publication.[12] The patterns that emerge paint a fascinating picture of a global world of print that was remarkable for the contrasting ways in which the industry was organized in different parts of Europe.

Tables 1 and 2 show the basic data for place and language of publication. There are few surprises here. We see that the print world of the sixteenth century continued to be dominated by the three great powerhouses that had emerged in the first age of print: the Empire, particularly the southern German cities; Italy; and France. Here lay most of Europe's most prestigious universities, and the major concentrations of great cities: together these two comprised both the major providers and consumers of books. The emergence of Antwerp as an economic and cultural force in the sixteenth century cements the place of the Netherlands in the second rank of European print culture alongside Spain and England; other peripheral cultures lag far behind.

Thus far our survey reveals much what one might expect: that books over the length of the sixteenth century were published conveniently close to their main

[12] Matthew Hall, 'European print culture in the sixteenth century: a sample from the *Index Aureliensis*' (M.Litt. dissertation, St Andrews, 2001).

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Table 1 *Place of publication: percentage of total recorded editions by country*

Germany	32·0
France	21·4
Italy	18·4
Low Countries	7·2
England	5·5
Swiss Confederation	5·4
Spain	3·1
Poland	1·9
Bohemia	1·6
Others[a]	1·7

[a] Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden.
Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

Table 2 *Language of books published* (*number of items*)

Latin	5,474
German	1,347
Italian	1,046
French	961
English	521
Spanish	275
Dutch	211
Danish	60
Polish	40
Hungarian	19
Czech	17
Portuguese	8
Swedish	4
Welsh	6

Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

markets, and that these lay in the complex of European conurbations north and south of the Alps, and east and west of the Rhine. But what these initial figures do not reveal is that behind all of these emerging national print cultures lay a rather separate dynamic. This is true even of the three dominant markets of Italy, France, and Germany.

We see this clearly when we turn to table 3, which lists the number of printing centres in each national market. This figure is very high for Germany, where an exceptionally large number of cities at some stage during the sixteenth century

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Table 3 *Number of printing centres by country*

Germany	92
Italy	60
France	53
Low Countries	27
Spain	20
Poland	13
Swiss Confederation	10
Hungary	9
Bohemia	8
England	6
Denmark	5
Portugal	3
Sweden	3
Scotland	2
Ireland	1

Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

boasted a printing press. The number is high also for Italy and France; England, on the other hand provides evidence of a printing press in only a handful of different towns (and few of these in fact operated continuously throughout the sixteenth century). This contrast is even starker if we confine our attention only to places that turn up a significant number of books in our sample (table 4 – here we have listed only places which are named as place of publication in more than thirty books). Here the Empire is revealed as being in a category all of its own: no other print world relied on so diverse a range of significant printing centres. In England, the starkest contrast, only one place (London) is revealed as significant in the terms of our sample; and even France, where books are at some point printed in a huge number of different places during the course of the century, reveals a very high measure of concentration. This finding is confirmed by our more refined ongoing survey of the world of French print, which forms the basis of the analysis in the last part of this paper.

The true extent of the contrasting organization of different national print cultures emerges most starkly if we turn to table 5, which deals with the relationship between the dominant print centre in each part of Europe and other satellite publishing towns. To probe the relationship between the centre and periphery, we calculated the proportion of the books printed in each print zone that emanated from the largest centre of printing. This calculation reveals the full extent of the variation in organizational models. One may in effect identify three different experiences. First we have print cultures in which the centre is totally dominant. This is true of England, and some of the very small peripheral print

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Table 4 *Significant centres of European printing*

Germany	22	
Italy	8	
France	5	(Paris/Lyon 75 per cent)
Low Countries	3	(Antwerp 56 per cent)
Spain	3	
Swiss Confederation	2	(Basle/Geneva 73 per cent)
Bohemia	1	
England	1	(London 97 per cent)
Denmark	1	
Poland	1	

Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

Table 5 *Centre and periphery: proportion of the total number of books printed in each country published in the largest printing centre*

		%
England	London	97
Denmark	Copenhagen	88
Poland	Cracow	75
Bohemia	Prague	70
Italy	Venice	56
Low Countries	Antwerp	56
France	Paris	53
Swiss Confederation	Basle	51
Spain	Salamanca	23
Germany	Cologne	13

Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

cultures. Then there are a number of examples characterized by what one might call the partially dominant centre. There is one predominant centre of print, but also other significant printing centres which carve out either an independent existence, at a rather more modest level that the main centre (this characterizes the relationship between Paris and Lyon in France) or a significant niche market. Aside from France, the Low Countries, Italy, and the Swiss Confederation – all important centres of print culture – all conform to this partially dispersed model.

The fully dispersed model is most clearly represented by the experience of Germany, where there is no one main centre of print: here, indeed, the output of the largest centre of print in the Empire comprises no more than 13 per cent of

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the total, as against 53 per cent for Paris in France and 97 per cent for London in England. The totally dispersed model characteristic of the Empire in fact finds an echo only in Spain, a secondary, though still important centre of print. In this respect, then, Germany, far from being normative for the sixteenth-century book world, was in fact highly exceptional.

It is only in the last few years that the value of this sort of bibliometric research has really begun to be appreciated by students of the intellectual culture of the Renaissance. Even now, it may not be immediately obvious why it was so important where, within a particular nation or language market, books were published. The critical importance of these different organizational models only becomes clear if one recognizes that each model created its own dynamic for the local book world.

England, for instance, was both a comparatively small market, and one wholly dominated by the centre. The English were not major producers of books for a number of reasons. England was a largely rural society, it had only two universities, and its population was relatively modest: around 3 million in 1500, against the 15 million of France. Intellectually as well as geographically it lay on the periphery of the main cultural and intellectual streams of European society, at the beginning of the sixteenth century at least. In consequence it played little part in the wider book culture of the continent: the relatively small number of books published in England were overwhelmingly for home consumption. This was a small book industry, where everybody would have been known to everybody else, and where the amount of work available to individual printers was heavily dominated by official commissions. This was not a difficult industry to control, partly because the printers all lived and worked cheek by jowl in one city, but also because none wanted to risk compromising their chance of official patronage. If that were not enough, England had no indigenous paper production; all the paper used by English printers had to be imported through the well-regulated ports.[13] All of these factors made clandestine printing very difficult. It was partly for these practical reasons that dissident publications – in the early Reformation Protestant, later in the century Catholic – were by and large published abroad and then smuggled back into the country. In fact there was very little unauthorized printing in England at any point during the sixteenth century; the sort of explosion of popular demand that Germany witnessed in the 1520s would simply not have been possible.[14]

In France, the largest market, Paris, was very closely regulated, but other alternative centres of French print did exist – not least Lyon, always happy to steal a march on its larger rival. The Netherlandish book market was very large,

[13] John Bidwell, 'French paper in English books', in John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, eds., *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain*, IV: *1557–1695* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 583–601.

[14] Andrew Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation: the English exception', in Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, eds., *The beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 157–79.

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proportional to the size of the population, but also rigorously controlled. The Netherlandish regime of Charles V introduced some of the most draconian legislation for book censorship anywhere in Europe. The impact of this was somewhat ameliorated by Antwerp's position as a major international trading metropolis – the sheer scale of trade made the movement of books more difficult to control.

These different print cultures evince considerable variation in their mode of organization, but all of these descriptions tend to confirm the exceptionalism of the German market. Here a large number of significant centres of printing, all relatively close to one another, rendered control of output and distribution exceptionally difficult. The nearest equivalent is found in a later age – the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century – where the ruling authorities faced similar difficulties in establishing any real control over the expression of opinion in print. In sixteenth-century Germany this problem is compounded by the existence of a multiplicity of ruling powers.

But the rather lax regulation of print in Germany evident in the early sixteenth century is very much the exception. Elsewhere, strong pressures for regulation of print came both from the government, wishing to control the expression of dissident opinion, and from within the industry itself. It is in this respect inaccurate to talk of censorship, because most curbs on freedom of production were entered into willingly by printers and publishers, who had no wish to see unauthorized editions spoil their market. These pressures were far less acute in Germany in the 1520s when the market itself was both large and growing rapidly.

All of these observations have proceeded from an assumption of markets driven by a large public interest in vernacular print. This is certainly the assumption underlying our analysis of the polemical battles of the German Reformation: that Luther's protest unlocked a new market for religious and political debate among the laity, and that this was pursued essentially through the local vernacular (or, if we think of Low German as a separate tongue, vernaculars). But the world of the Latin book should not be ignored. It may not be immediately clear why we should offer more than a cursory glance at Latin books, since our paradigm of the book and the Reformation assumes the easy dominance of the vernacular. But a consideration of the statistics gathered from our trial survey of European print culture suggests that the importance of Latin publishing can scarcely be ignored.

For, if we consider merely the raw figures presented in table 2, over half the books published during the century were in Latin, rather than one of Europe's vernacular languages. The startling significance of this must be emphasized: taking the Reformation century as a whole, works published in Latin still outnumbered books published in all other languages put together. In the first half of the century, despite the undoubted impact of the German *Flugschriften*, Latin retained an easy dominance of the European world of print; indeed, if we are to believe our more detailed analysis, it is only towards the very end of the century that vernacular publishing began first to match and then to overtake publishing in Latin.

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It is worth pausing a moment to consider why this should be so. There is no doubt that Latin publishing continued to dominate the market for books in Europe's universities and other branches of learned and scientific culture. Even in markets where, and with revolutionary impact, the Reformation was beginning to engage a new audience, Latin still remained the language of debate among trained theologians. It goes without saying that Luther could not have hoped to gain converts among his intellectual peers had he not also been a skilled Latin author. The growth of counter-churches also stimulated a vast controversial and exegetical literature in the learned languages. Beyond this, there were vast areas of the book world where the vernacular made comparatively little impact. Scientific, legal, and medical texts remained predominantly in Latin. Interest in the classical authors remained high throughout the century, and this ensured another strong market for Latin print. Interestingly, Latin also played a predominant role in many areas where the book made the greatest strides during the sixteenth century: one thinks here of the relatively new genres of books, such as technical books, books on architecture, astrology and cosmography, or the natural sciences. These were genres that relied heavily on the illustrative potential of the woodcut, but they were not for that reason more popular genres. On the contrary, the claim to respectability on the part of the new sciences relied heavily on use of the learned language: these relatively innovative printing projects were therefore published predominantly in Latin. One is forced to conclude that in the book world as a whole, the importance of Latin was not much diminished by popular religious controversy. Latin remained the badge of honour that distinguished the man of culture.

An inevitable consequence is that while the vernacular texts of Reformation polemic are those which have caught the eye, Latin publishing continued to loom large in the financial considerations of anyone concerned with the business of books. Crucially for our investigations, the publication of books in Latin was structured in a totally different way from the output of vernacular books (see table 6). There were major centres of Latin print in most of the significant centres of printing in continental Europe: in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and the Swiss Confederation. There were surprisingly few Latin books published in Italy and Spain. Meanwhile, English consumers of Latin books, as we can see from the miniscule numbers published in London, relied almost wholly on imports (as they had, indeed, in the manuscript era).[15]

If we now look behind these broad national markets to a closer investigation of the publication of Latin books, we can see that the European market for learned print was organized in a very particular way, and one that contrasts markedly with the production of vernacular texts. In general terms, a very high proportion of Latin books were published in a small number of Europe's largest centres of

[15] Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of printed books into England and Scotland', in Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain*, III: *1400–1557* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 179–201.

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Table 6 *Latin and vernacular (percentage of total for each country)*

	Latin	Vernacular
Germany	61	39
Italy	45	55
France	61	39
England	11	89
Low Countries	67	33
Spain	28	72
Swiss Confederation	77	23
Bohemia	80	20
Denmark	11	89
Hungary	66	34

Source: Analysis of 10,000 consecutive items taken from the *Index Aureliensis*.

print. Places like Basle in the Swiss Confederation, Lyon and Paris in France, and Antwerp in the Low Countries became renowned centres of Latin print. The reasons for this heavy degree of market concentration were both economic and aesthetic. Many of these Latin books were large, complex, and therefore expensive projects. Editions of the classics might use many different fonts of type to distinguish text, textual variations, side-notes, and footnotes. The Renaissance concern for textual accuracy imposed a heavy burden of expectation: the books themselves were usually published in large formats and in a pleasing italic type. The new genres of book that enjoyed a growing vogue in the sixteenth century, such as architectural texts or books on botany, also often required considerable specialist expertise, not least in crafting the illustrative woodcuts that were fundamental to their success.

These were difficult, expensive projects, that could only as a rule be taken on by experienced printers, and in well-capitalized publishing houses. These tended to be found in the largest and best-financed centres of European printing. Further, if the initial expense tended to militate against the involvement of smaller printing shops, the same economic considerations militated against local reprints. The market for Latin books in Europe was clearly very large, but it was also very dispersed. It therefore inevitably worked to somewhat different rules from the more concentrated national print markets. Books tended to be moved over longer distances to their purchasers. Because the projects were larger, and involved heavier initiation costs, publishers tended to print larger editions, and expect to stockpile copies for longer before an edition was exhausted. All of this played into the hands of the industry's most established figures. There was much less room for alert, speculative players intent on a quick profit by exploiting a sudden rise in demand – the classic model of the German Reformation.

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Before moving to draw further conclusions from this sketch of Latin print, a word of caution should perhaps be entered. It might well be argued that the bare figures presented here might misrepresent the whole world of print culture in this one, important respect: for it is very obvious that big books survive much better than small books. It is almost certainly the case that these differential survival rates weigh the odds heavily in favour of Latin, the learned language. We are likely to have at least one surviving copy of almost all the books published in Latin during the sixteenth century; one can certainly not say the same of all books, pamphlets and broadsheets published in the vernacular.

The evidence for this simple statement is overwhelming. Latin books were by and large published to be studied, and to be preserved; many items published in the vernacular, whether these be broadsheets, pamphlets, or small handbooks, were not. The fact that a very high proportion of all vernacular pamphlets published in the sixteenth century survive in only one, two, or three copies suggests that a large number must have been published which do not survive at all. If we regard any book published, whether it be a single sheet broadsheet or a large folio of 400 leaves, as a single bibliographical item, the raw figures from the *Index Aureliensis* must greatly understate the quantity of vernacular publishing.

To balance this, one should note that Latin books are on the whole much larger. This is true in all respects. A high proportion of Latin books are in the larger formats (folio or quarto); Latin books are on the whole much longer. On the other side an overwhelming proportion of printed items of two sheets or less (that is, broadsheets or pamphlets of thirty-two pages or less in octavo) were in the vernacular. From the point of view of printer and publisher this was an absolutely crucial distinction. A broadsheet proclamation was a valuable commission for a printer (since it was often produced for a single official purchaser, and therefore helped cash flow) but it was only one day's work. A major Latin edition might employ the press – and often more than one press – for months at a time.

Thus to understand the real impact of Latin publishing on the European world of print, one has to look not only at the raw data of numbers of editions, but at the length of books, and thus at the amount of time they would have occupied the presses. Paris, for instance, was a major centre of Latin print. Judging from an analysis of the books listed by Bridget Moreau in her bibliography of books published in Paris 1500–35, Latin books commanded the market throughout the period: about 75 per cent of all books published in Paris during this time were in Latin.[16] Furthermore, and despite the upsurge of popular religious controversy that followed the Reformation, the proportion of books published in Latin in Paris was in no way diminished towards the end of this period. Given that many of these projects were very substantial and ambitious books, intended for an international as much as a local market, it is very likely that the average Paris print shop would have been dominated by the demand for Latin print. It is more

[16] Brigitte Moreau, *Inventaire chronologique des editions parisiennes du XVIe siècle, 1501–1535* (4 vols., Paris, 1972–92).

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than likely that during this whole period Paris's presses spent on average less than 15 per cent of their time – one day in a six day week – printing works in French.

This has many important implications for our study of the Reformation. It certainly should warn us that when Protestants, for their own purposes, began to promote the idea of the greater dignity and nobility of the vernacular, they were arguing very much against the grain of sixteenth-century culture. And while the rise of the *Flugschriften* created and developed other new markets for books in Europe, it did little to dent the appeal of the existing market for Latin books – in fact, the two markets seem to have grown together as the century wore on. For Europe's printers and publishers, in particular, the Reformation was not a lifeline; indeed, for many in the most established print centres, away from the immediate turmoil of Luther's movement, it represented a considerable complicating factor. We can see this clearly if we turn to an investigation of one particular market, France, where the impact of the Reformation on a sophisticated and complex book world was very different from that in Luther's own homeland.

III

With France we turn to a particular focus of our recent scholarly interest, and to research undertaken partly to test the wider applicability of the German paradigm of book and Reformation set out above. France was a country with a mature, robust printing industry. It also experienced a genuine, popular Reformation, albeit a generation later than Germany: in the early 1560s, when the rapid growth of the Huguenot movement was a major contributing factor to the extended political and religious crisis we know as the French Wars of Religion. What, it is fair to ask, was the contribution of printing to this complex of events? How far did France's experience of print and the Reformation parallel that of Luther's homeland?

To address this issue we are able here to draw on a major new research project that will, in due course, shed a great deal of new light on French print culture in the sixteenth century. During the last seven years a group of graduate students and researchers at the University of St Andrews have been engaged in creating a new database of books printed in French during the sixteenth century. With the help of a programme of visits to libraries throughout France and elsewhere in Europe, this work has now gathered information on about 50,000 editions.[17] What is presented here is based on a preliminary analysis of this data.

In the first days of the stirs raised by Luther, news of the controversies did not take long to reach France. The enterprising Swiss publisher Froben reported brisk sales in Paris for his early (Latin) edition of Luther's collected writings in 1519, and

[17] For up-to-date information on the St Andrews project, the working method, database, and libraries incorporated into the project files, visit the project website at http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~www_rsi/book/book.htm

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the distinguished university in Paris became a critical early test case for the wider appeal of Luther's teachings.[18] Throughout the 1520s, in fact, one can gather plentiful evidence of interest both in the issue of church reform, and in German events. But for all that the movement in France did not achieve the same coherence and potency as was the case in its German homeland.

There were several reasons why this proved to be the case. First, the French authorities took swift action to contain publication and distribution of evangelical print. Paris, as we have seen, was one of the largest centres of Europe's publishing industry, but it was also one of the best organized and most tightly controlled. Parisian printers were not free to engage in the speculative publication of translated reprints of the German *Flugscriften*, even had they wished to – and there is little reason to believe that established members of the Paris book world would have turned from the lucrative, mainly Latin works that were the mainstay of their business without the assurance of either official encouragement or overwhelming public demand. Neither, in fact, was forthcoming. For in France, Luther's struggle was not a national, patriotic issue: a crucial element in the early drama of public support for Luther in Germany was missing. In fact, in the particular context of France, national, patriotic factors tended to militate against Luther's movement, since the identification of the crown with a Catholic, Gallican church was a crucial source of strength for the established order. French evangelicals had hopes that they could manoeuvre through these shoals, by converting the king's undoubted interest in Renaissance scholarship into a genuine interest in church reform, but this called for a subtle process of lobbying in private and at court. The raising of popular passions would only damage this cause.

Thus in France the political context was entirely different from that in Luther's own homeland; but so too was the degree of resonance that the Reformation found, both among churchmen, and the public at large. Striking in our analysis of the output of French books in the 1520s is the swift and effective Catholic response to the evangelical criticism emanating from Germany. This, of course, provides an instructive contrast with Germany, which is further reinforced when we delve a little more deeply into the type of works published against Luther in France – and in French – in the years immediately after the Reformation controversies. The campaign against Luther was led from the beginning by doctors of the Sorbonne who, like Luther on the other side, quickly found an effective popular voice. These authors also swiftly identified themes important to French Catholics that had to be defended, foremost among them the Catholic Mass. Both these factors are epitomized in the career of Pierre Doré, Dominican and Doctor of Theology, and a man now little known outside the narrow world of scholarly specialists. But in his day he was one of the most popular religious writers in France: his fifty-six known editions of twenty-four different works place him

[18] For the early history of Luther's reception in France see Francis Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne* (Geneva, 1979).

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ahead of Luther in the popularity of religious writers who published in French.[19] In purely statistical terms only Calvin would surpass his impact on the world of French vernacular religious publishing in the first half of the sixteenth century. Luther, of course, laboured under a considerable handicap, in that his works were officially outlawed. All the works of Luther that appeared in French were printed with greater or lesser degree of subterfuge, and Luther was never named on the title-page.[20] Pierre Doré, in contrast, enjoyed the support of major Parisian printing houses.

We have then to recognize that the overwhelming superiority evangelicals enjoyed in the polemical battle in Germany simply did not carry over into other European print cultures. From the earliest days of the Reformation controversies, in France Catholic authors at least matched the church's critics in their output of popular theological works, and this continued to be the case for all but a short period in mid-century when the Huguenot surge was as its most intense. There were many reasons for this, not least the early ban on Lutheran publications in France, and the reluctance of Parisian printers to involve themselves in risky disapproved projects. But the extent of popular demand for books defending familiar, popular beliefs can also not be doubted.[21]

Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that in their eagerness to defend the church from foreign heresies, the French authorities took one decision that ultimately was to prove very damaging. In 1526, spurred by evidence that the call for the pure Gospel, *rein Evangelium*, had become a powerful polemical tool in Germany, the Parisian authorities ordered a ban on publication of vernacular scripture in France.[22] One can only imagine the frustration of Parisian printers. Already, not least in the popularity of the New Testament of Lefèvre, there was plentiful evidence that editions of the Bible in French would constitute a major market. And Parisian printers had the equipment, technical skill, and resources to produce large, illustrated books, of the sort that would be required for the most lavish Bible editions. But the printers fell reluctantly into line. Too many had too much to lose by defying the king – and Bibles were not the sort of books that could be produced in a clandestine way. So the production of vernacular Bibles took place away from Paris – first in Antwerp, then in Lyon, and finally in Geneva.[23] In Geneva, the publication of multiple editions of the Bible in French

[19] On Doré see Francis Higman, *Piety and the people: religious printing in French, 1511–1551* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 5, 177–90.

[20] Bernd Moeller, 'Luther in Europe: his works in translation, 1517–1546', in E. I. Kouri and Tom Scott, eds., *Politics and society in Reformation Europe* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 235–51. Francis Higman, 'Les traductions françaises de Luther, 1524–1550', in his *Lire et découvrir: la circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Geneva, 1998), pp. 201–32.

[21] Issues effectively explored in Christopher Elwood, *The body broken: the Calvinist doctrine of the Eucharist and the symbolization of power in sixteenth-century France* (Oxford, 1999).

[22] Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne*, pp. 26–7.

[23] B. T. Chambers, *Bibliography of French Bibles: fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French-language editions of the Scriptures* (Geneva, 1983).

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became one of two cornerstones of the Genevan book market – the other being the works of Calvin.

Calvin began to make himself felt in the French publishing world from the early 1540s.[24] Like Luther, the Genevan reformer showed an acute awareness of the need to nurture relationships with printers. In the 1540s, the first decade after he was permanently established in Geneva, Calvin published many short, popular works. The success of these sharp, pungent polemical tracts helped to finance other major projects, such as editions of his Biblical commentaries and the *Institutes*. As Geneva became known as a centre of Protestant print, the new industry attracted a number of members of major Parisian printing dynasties. They brought with them capital, skill, and expertise in handling large projects. Soon, the Genevan publishing industry was one of the most dynamic industries in a fast-growing town. Here the comparison with Wittenberg is very close. The education industry – that is, publishing and the university (in the Genevan case, the Academy) – was a cornerstone of economic growth. It is not always acknowledged the extent to which fortunes were made through the Reformation (though one only has to go and stand outside Lucas Cranach's house in Wittenberg for the point to be abundantly clear). So it was in Geneva. Calvin was one of the most talented preachers and authors of the day. But he was also very good for business.

Back in France, the debate inspired by the Reformation continued to rage. Evangelicals had high hopes of the king, and particularly of the king's sister. But after 1535 the commitment of the crown to suppress heresy never really wavered. Protestantism became an underground movement. For all that, by the 1550s it had become increasingly clear that the policy of repression had failed. Prosecutions and executions had not prevented the steady growth of evangelical communities, inspired and strongly supported from Geneva. In 1559 the then king, Henry II, made peace with Spain, intending to devote his attention to the final suppression of heresy. But his death in a freak accident plunged France into political crisis, and evangelicals, together with their sympathizers at court, seized the moment.

The result was that France experienced in the next six years (1560–5) a genuine popular Reformation. The explosive growth of the Calvinist movement during these years stands comparison with Germany during the first years when Luther's message found a mass audience (1520–5). Churches grew from small underground cells to large congregations, a mass movement that enjoyed the support of 50 per cent of the French nobility and 25 per cent of the urban population. Most important of all for the gathering political crisis was the rate of growth, and the obvious self-confidence of the movement. As in Germany in the 1520s, no one knew where it would end. The potential seemed boundless.

As in Germany, this new popular Protestantism was accompanied by a surge of printing. As part of our wider survey of French print culture, the St Andrews project has made a special study of Protestant printing in the French language,

[24] Jean-François Gilmont, *Jean Calvin et le livre imprimé* (Geneva, 1997).

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charting growth from the first tentative evangelical works in French in 1520, through to the end of the century and the end of the religious wars. This has, for the first time, created the secure statistical base with which we can compare the French experience of evangelical print with that of Germany. There are important points of comparison, but also of difference.

First, this statistical work brings home the importance of this extraordinary burst of energy and excitement in the early 1560s. Over 30 per cent of all Protestant works published in French during the sixteenth century appeared during the years 1560–5. This was the only point in the century at which French Protestants outpublished their Catholic opponents. This surge in demand also demanded rapid reorganization of the means of production. With events moving so fast, Geneva was too far away from the major markets within France to meet demand for small political and religious tracts, editions of the Bible, and psalms. New centres of Protestant publication grew up in Caen, Orléans, and Lyon.[25]

For all that, French Catholics marshalled a robust defence of their church, and of traditional beliefs. In France, Protestants never wholly dominated the world of print. By 1562, after the initial shock of adapting to the new political climate, Catholic authors had found their voice, pouring out a flood of tracts which both offered a lucid and eloquent defence of the essentials of the Catholic faith and poured scorn on Calvin.[26] The printing houses of Paris gave themselves very willingly to this polemical effort, for the Catholic hold on Paris was never shaken. This may well have been crucial to the survival of French Catholicism. When the royal government, led by Catherine of Medici, felt itself so weakened that concessions to the Huguenots seemed inevitable, it was the Catholic populations of Paris and other cities that made it clear that this was unacceptable.[27] Spurred by their preachers, inspired by the scabrous sermons and religious literature, they rallied to those who identified with the cause of resistance, notably the house of Guise. Ultimately war broke out in 1562 because French Catholics would not accept crown concessions to Protestants. Catholicism in France was a popular cause.

Once war broke out, Catholics soon gained the upper hand, both in military terms, and in the polemical battle. The momentum of Protestant growth was decisively arrested by the events of the first war (1562–3), and Protestantism was in decline even before the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572. By the second decade of the war, the polemical battle was less one between the faiths – the

[25] Louis Desgraves, *Elie Gibier imprimeur à Orléans (1536–1588)* (Geneva, 1966); Andrew Pettegree, 'Protestantism, publication and the French Wars of Religion: the case of Caen', in Robert J. Bast and Andrew C. Gow, eds., *Continuity and change: the harvest of late-mediaeval and Reformation history* (Leiden, 2000); idem, 'Protestant printing during the French Wars of Religion: the Lyon press of Jean Saugrain', in Tom Brady and James Tracy, eds., *Essays presented to Heiko Oberman on his seventieth birthday* (Brill, 2003).

[26] Luc Racaut, *Hatred in print: Catholic propaganda and Protestant identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot, 2002).

[27] Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the cross: Catholics and Huguenots in sixteenth-century Paris* (New York, 1991).

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Huguenots had conceded that the conversion of France was beyond them – and more one within Catholicism: between those who prepared to offer some toleration to the increasingly embattled Huguenot movement, and those who favoured a policy of extermination.

French Protestantism, then, ultimately failed, and for reasons which had much to do with the local culture of religion. Despite its failure – indeed, perhaps because of the contrast it provides in this respect with Germany – it still provides material for an important case study. Looking primarily at the brief period of hectic evangelical growth between 1559 and 1565, what can we say of the relationship revealed between print culture and belief in the particular French context?

We can see that, as in Germany, the opportunity of sudden widespread popular interest brought a rapid restructuring of the French print world. As demand for Protestant books increased exponentially in the years after 1559, new printing centres swiftly emerged to cater to the demand: often in French towns that had until this point played only a modest role in French print culture. The content and tone of these books also bears closer examination, for in these years when the churches expanded most rapidly the movement was far less closely controlled from Geneva. The Genevan reformers were too geographically distant to react to the speed of change in political events, or the raging religious debate. Genevan publications were noticeably more measured in tone than the more polemical works published in France during these years. In the new print centres within France, we notice that each different place has its own distinctive style. There is a high degree of specialism between different publishing centres.

Nevertheless, it is clear that, in France at least, a local print industry is not essential to the rapid growth of an evangelical movement. The Huguenot movement made some of its most rapid and enduring progress away from Paris, in the far south, where towns like Nîmes, Montpellier, and Montauban swiftly became important strongholds of the new movement. None of these towns ever developed a substantial indigenous printing industry.[28] In these cases, it seemed, the supply lines from Geneva and Lyon were adequate to supply the books required by these new congregations.

These observations direct our attention to other important aspects of the relationship between the book and the Reformation that have proved most elusive to scholarly investigation. What can we say about the reasons why people adhered to the new churches? Obviously here a whole range of stimuli played a part: charismatic preaching, peer pressure, the example of a family member or social superior. But in the realm of the book, it is particularly clear that in the French example, verse and song played a crucial role in creating a popular movement. We see this at work at two levels. Contemporary observers were

[28] Philip Conner, *Huguenot heartland: Montauban and southern French Calvinism during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot, 2002); idem, 'A provincial perspective: Protestant print culture in southern France', in Andrew Pettegree, Paul Nelles, and Philip Conner, eds., *The sixteenth century French religious book* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 286–302.

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certainly aware of the particular role of the psalms in creating Huguenot group solidarity. The metrical Psalter was an original, inspired creation of Calvinism. The product of twenty years of development in the Genevan church, the full translation of the psalms was finally completed in 1562: just in time to play its part in the largest movement of church forming. The metrical Psalter proved to be a marvellously adaptable, as well as distinctive, tool of church building. The psalms were suitable both for communal worship and for use outside the church. There were psalms for all moods and occasions. Since the psalms were set to an unusually wide repertoire of tunes, the association of tune and words was very close. Since they were rapidly memorized, not least through repeated use in the churches, they formed a crucial bridge in building the movement from a literate core to the wider population.[29] Alongside the psalms the Huguenots popularized a range of political and satirical songs often put to the tunes of well-known psalms. These songs ridiculed the Catholic clergy and Catholic political leadership, while praising Protestant champions like Condé and Coligny. Others were penned to celebrate Protestant victories on the field of battle, or the takeover of French cities. These too helped create popular momentum at moments of maximum excitement.

It is important to dwell on this point, not least because historians of the Reformation have consistently undervalued the importance of song in sixteenth-century culture, and paid scant attention to its role as a tool of the Reformation. In France it was clearly crucial: the illustrative woodcut, on the other hand, played no role whatsoever. Much has been written about the use of visual material to bridge the gap between the literate and the unlettered. It has become a common assumption, as those of us who teach undergraduates know, that the evangelical message crossed the barrier between the literate and illiterate with the help of visual culture. To our very visual age this seems a natural assumption; and perhaps for that reason it has not been sufficiently tested.

With respect to France, however, one can with some confidence assert the following. The quantity of illustration in religious print certainly *declined* after the Reformation. Illustrations were much used in traditional, pre-Reformation works such as books of hours. These were popular books, but promoted images and core beliefs of which the reformers could scarcely approve. After the Reformation, the market for books of hours gradually declined, yet woodcuts continued to appear mostly in expensive books (and, indeed, are one of the most expensive features of these books). In France, most illustrations appeared in books with no polemical intent: technical, scientific, or medical. They are also used in books of astrology; where they find their way into cheap print, it is mostly in newsbooks or calendars.

French Protestants very largely spurned illustration, or the illustrated broadsheet, as a polemical weapon. In the French Wars of Religion illustration plays a role in cheap print only in the period 1589–90, in the conflict between the Guise

[29] Andrew Pettegree, *Huguenot voices: the book and the communication process during the Protestant Reformation* (Brewster Lecture Series, Greenville, 2000).

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and the crown. This is a conflict within Catholicism. Only a handful of the more than 1,000 Protestant works published between 1560 and 1565 make any use of illustration.

How then does French Protestantism become a popular movement? The overwhelming conclusion is that in order for the movement to broaden its appeal beyond the unlettered it must have continued to rely on oral dissemination: primarily the spoken word, and song. The full extent of this culture of song is only now emerging as the St Andrews French book project continues its survey of French libraries: these are small tracts, which often only survive in one solitary copy. But they played a vital and distinctive role in building a French Protestant church.

IV

We are now perhaps in a position to draw some conclusions from this survey of contrasting examples: the global survey of European book culture, and a closer look at the particular example of France. The evidence we have laid out here suggests, most obviously, that the German paradigm of the relationship between print and Reformation has no general applicability: that all Reformation movements have their own character. The nature of this local character is shaped partly by social and political structures, but partly also by the organization of the local publishing industry. In this respect the German experience was not normative, or typical, but very much the exception.

It is certainly possible to create a popular evangelical movement without the particular structural circumstances of the German movement. Other countries, France as we have seen, but also the Netherlands, have their popular moment. A well-developed print culture plays an important role in this. The role of the charismatic leader is also important – in Germany, Luther, in France, Calvin. The charismatic leader extends the range of influence beyond those that can meet or hear them personally. But he is also important because the charismatic leader becomes a major economic force – a key local wealth generator. This helps consolidate their authority with a local elite, whose political instincts are likely otherwise to be more conservative. For Wittenberg to have given Luther up after 1520 would have been like killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. In Geneva, Calvin's writings were a cornerstone of the local economy, just as his sermons were a major tourist attraction.[30] Frequently during the 1540s and early 1550s Calvin and his colleagues found themselves in dispute with the city council, but his role in the local economy was a source of extraordinary strength and power – if not one upon which he dwells in his correspondence.[31] The laws of supply and demand, it must be emphasized, operate even in the realm of ideas.

[30] As outstanding example of preacher tourism is related by the Catholic author Florimond de Raemond. See Alastair Duke, Gillian Lewis, and Andrew Pettegree, eds., *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1610: a collection of documents* (Manchester, 1992), pp. 37–8.

[31] William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Manchester, 1994).

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Most of all, the evidence presented in the last part of this article suggests that it may be necessary to rethink our sense of the process by which Reformation becomes popular. In particular we suggest that it is time to subject the role of visual culture to more sceptical re-examination: and this for Germany, as much as for the French example we have studied. Here too we need to investigate more systematically the role of song.[32]

Finally, it is necessary to recognize that print will not always operate to the advantage of those arguing for change – print was not necessarily, in terms of twentieth-century debate, a progressive force.[33] If we consider the whole realm of print in French, the balance is fairly even. Print played an important role in the growth of science, but also disseminated much nonsense, particular in the realm of medicine and astronomy. Print can disseminate error, as well as truth. In the realm of religious ideas, in France print was used every bit as effectively by defenders of old ways as by promoters of new.

So where does this leave the complex print and Reformation? Can one envisage a genuine mass movement without print? Perhaps this calls for a more systematic investigation of the process of evangelical growth in a country like Scotland, which experienced a Protestant revolution with little or no indigenous print. Certainly it reminds us that, for those who study the print culture of the sixteenth-century, business questions – questions of distribution and the organizing of the market – are as important as the location of publication.

[32] Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as propaganda in the German Reformation* (Aldershot, 2001).

[33] As in the classic formulation of Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The printing press as an agent of change* (Cambridge, 1982).

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