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CENTRE AND PERIPHERY IN THE EUROPEAN BOOK WORLD

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ABSTRACT. The rapid spread of print in the fifteenth century masks considerable difficulties that faced the industry in adapting to the new disciplines of mass production. Many early print shops were short-lived. Within two generations production of printed books was concentrated in a comparatively small number of major centres of production. This paper explores the implications of these developments for our understanding of the 'print revolution'. It considers in particular the contrasting fortunes of three major markets: France, one of the largest centres of production; the Netherlands, a major hub of international trade; and England, which lay towards the periphery of the European book world.

I

The printed book plays a fundamental role in any presentation of the culture of European society in the centuries of the Renaissance and the Reformation. In all general treatments of the transition from the medieval to the modern, print emerges as one of the crucial determinants. It is thereby firmly embedded as one of the foundation stones of a progress-orientated view of western society, not least through Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal presentation of print culture as a catalyst in the development of an enlightened humane society: *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*.[1] It is curious that as other teleological progress-orientiated historical interpretations have fallen out of favour, this view of print and progress has proved so remarkably tenacious. This is not all down to Eisenstein: it also owes something to the fact that the first producers of printed books themselves maintained a constant litany in praise of print. Martin Luther's hymn to print, which he famously describes as 'God's highest act of Grace', is well known – but in fact Luther's view fitted comfortably

[1] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change. Communication and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1979); *idem*, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1983). The argument is summarised in preliminary form in *idem*, 'Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought: A Preliminary Report', *Journal of Modern History*, 40 (1968), 7–29.

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within a framework of analysis that stretched right back to the first ecstatic responses to the new invention, when print was effortlessly aligned with the discoveries of the Renaissance, turning darkness into light. Such a view, refined by scholarship, has essentially defined educated opinion in the centuries since.

In the fifteenth century curiosity and enthusiasm for the new invention appeared to be universal. Until 1455 printing by moveable type had been experimental technology, not necessarily destined to succeed. Within twenty years printing was an established part of the book world in almost every part of Europe. From Mainz it spread very rapidly to the other towns of the German Empire, and throughout Europe. Itinerant German artisans introduced printing to Italy by 1465, and Paris by 1470. It spread swiftly to the Low Countries, and thence across the Channel to England. Eastwards it reached Poland (Cracow) by 1473, and the Iberian peninsula (Barcelona and Valencia) in the same year. These first bridgeheads were usually in major centres of commerce, government or established centres of medieval manuscript book production. But a defining feature of this new book world would be the rapidity with which this productive capacity was diffused. In the Netherlands printing presses were established in over twenty towns throughout the northern and southern provinces before 1501; in the Francophone world the figure was closer to forty. From Mainz print spread throughout the German Empire, and to points further east. The first book in Czech was published before 1475, in Pilsen; the first book in Croat, a Breviary of the Roman Rite, in 1483.[2] This latter project was indicative of the extraordinary ambition of some of these earliest ventures, since the Breviary was printed in two colours, red and black (necessitating a skilled process of double impression) and in glagolitic characters. This type was specially designed and cut for the Breviary, probably in Venice.[3]

In all, a printing press had been established at some point in over 250 different locations throughout Europe by the end of the fifteenth century.[4] Nevertheless this confident narrative of expansion is only one part of the story. In fact, it masks a severe crisis that afflicted the new industry in the last decades of the fifteenth century, a crisis that necessitated a swift and brutal restructuring of the industry even before the first generation of experimental works had been concluded.

It is well known that the printed book owed part of its spectacular early success to the manner in which print emulated familiar physical features of the manuscript. As far as the visual appearance of the new

[2] Eliska Ryznar, *Books in Czechoslovakia, Past and Present* (Wiesbaden, 1989), 5.

[3] Alexander Stipcevic, 'Aspects de la production du livre croate au XVe siècle', in *Les croates et la civilisation du livre*, ed. Hernik Heger and Janine Matillon (Paris, 1986), 35–46.

[4] Philippe Nieto, 'Géographie des impressions européennes du XVe siècle', *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, 118–21 (2004), 125–73.

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printed book was concerned this was greatly to be welcomed: purchasers welcomed a product that was both eye-catchingly new and reassuringly familiar. But what was not immediately clear was that the familiar business of manuscript production offered a model of distribution and sales that was wholly inappropriate for print. The manuscript functioned, in effect, through a system of on-demand reprint.[5] There were, in late medieval Europe, some major centres of production, where manuscripts were turned out almost in industrial quantities. University towns such as Paris and Bologna dealt in school books; major commercial centres, such as Bruges, Florence and Paris, catered for the luxury market.[6] But manuscript production was also very widely dispersed: any place where there was both a competent scribe, and an available text, could contribute to the supply of manuscripts.

This experience of local production set up an utterly unrealistic expectation for the organisation of the print industry. At first, every city, every court and every episcopal see aspired to its place in the new art. Print spread with astonishing rapidity, often to places of relatively modest size. Whereas such places could deal with the disposal of relatively modest numbers of manuscripts, the disposal of whole print runs of printed books was a very different matter.

The difficulties that print would face in this regard were not immediately apparent, since the early expansion was supported by the enthusiasm of the ruling elites. But when the novelty wore off, printing presses were functioning in many places where they were not economically viable.[7] The result was a rapid contraction in the market. Many towns that had boasted a printing press from early in the incunabula age disappeared from the printing map of Europe for several generations. To take some examples from Italy, Treviso was one town where printing was introduced in 1471 and where eleven separate presses operated in the next twenty years. Yet when the last of these closed in 1493 printing in the town ceased until 1589. In Udine the press established in 1484 lasted just two years; the next press did not appear there until 1592.[8] In France around thirty places boasted a printing press at some point in the incunabula age; after the late century crisis, perhaps only three cities,

[5] Curt F. Bühler, *The Fifteenth-Century Book. The Scribes, the Printers, the Decorators* (Philadelphia, 1960).

[6] Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (2002), 281–3.

[7] Martha Tedeschi, 'Publish and Perish', in *Printing the Written Word. The Social History of Books circa 1450–1520*, ed. Sandra L. Hindman (Ithaca, 1991), 41–67; Susan Noakes, 'The Development of the Book Market in Late Quattrocento Italy. Printers' Failure and the Role of the Middleman', *Journal of Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 11 (1981), 23–55.

[8] Neil Harris, 'Italy', in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, ed. Michael J. Suarez and Henry Woudhuysen (Oxford, 2009).

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Paris, Lyon and Rouen, could sustain a press continuously through the first half of the sixteenth century.

This amounted to a complete restructuring of the publishing industry. This took place between about 1485 and 1520. From the 1490s printing was concentrated in a far smaller number of well-capitalised ventures established for the most part in Europe's major trading cities. These larger firms were able to take on the larger, more ambitious works that required either a strong local market or, in the case of Latin books, a trans-European distribution network.[9] The larger firms were able to support the very considerable investment often required to bring an edition to the press; they could finance the storage of unsold copies, often for considerable periods before an edition would be exhausted; and they were able to develop the sophisticated networks of transportation and exchange necessary to bring their products to a readership spread throughout Europe.

Thus by the first two decades of the sixteenth century, the production of printed books was characterised not by the extraordinary diversity suggested by the enumeration of the multiple locations that had experienced print, but by a high degree of concentration. In France, Paris emerged not only as a major centre of European production, but as the dominant force within the French industry. In Italy, Venice would be responsible for half the total output of books published throughout the whole Italian peninsula in the sixteenth century. An extraordinary proportion of the entire output of European printing in the next hundred years would be concentrated in fewer than a dozen large centres of production: a steel spine that ran along Europe's major trade routes from Antwerp and Paris to the north, through Cologne, Basle, Strasbourg and Lyon to Venice in the south. Within these printing behemoths was concentrated much of the investment capacity of the industry, and the most sophisticated mechanisms of financing, warehousing and distribution. These cities were the natural focus of projects that required substantial investment. They utterly dominated the market in scholarly books. This applied particularly to the production of books in the scholarly languages, for notwithstanding the eye-catching experimentation with vernacular publication throughout Europe, books in Latin remained the core business of the sixteenth-century book trade.

The true importance of this Latin trade has been somewhat obscured by the undoubted success of early ventures in vernacular print, books that were often significant cultural milestones, and often played a significant role in the development of a local vernacular culture. Caxton's experiments in English printing are a striking example. But in many

[9] Oscar von Hase, *Die Koberger: Eine Darstellung des Buchhändlerischen Geschäftsbetriebes in der Zeit des Überganges vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Leipzig, 1885).

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parts of Europe the vernacular reading community was not at this time large enough to sustain on its own a substantial publishing business. Book production was sustained over the first century of print by established and rather traditional markets, with Latin continuing as the overwhelmingly most important medium of publication.

In this Latin market, the locus of production mattered far less than the establishment of an efficient distribution network. It mattered not to a purchaser whether a book was published in Paris or Basel, so long as they could obtain the desired title, at a price they could afford, and in a timely fashion. At an early stage in this history of print there developed a market of great efficiency and sophistication to ensure that books could be transported around Europe in this way. At least with regard to Latin books the sixteenth-century book world was to a large extent one integrated market. The salvation of print lay in the development of an efficient market of exchange and distribution that enabled books to be transported to a readership community widely dispersed around Europe.

This was achieved, building around two critical features of the late medieval economy: the system of international trade fairs, and the development of efficient credit mechanisms. The wholesale market in books was built very largely around exchange, focused on the strategically situated twice yearly book fairs at Frankfurt.[10] The success of Frankfurt and subsidiary markets in places like Lyon, Basel and Leipzig (an important gateway mart for eastern Europe) further reinforced the supremacy of the industry giants, who could rely on Frankfurt to dispose of a major part of their print runs to a small number of clients within months of publication.

Through these developments of marketing, finance and production strategy, Europe's printers had achieved the structural changes necessary to ensure the long-term viability of print. They had also reshaped the European book world in a manner almost unrecognisable from the exuberant dispersed production of the early years. The mature print world of sixteenth-century Europe can helpfully be understood as a series of concentric circles. By far the most important, both intellectually and in terms of book production, was an inner core comprising France, the German Empire and the towns of northern Italy. These were joined by, and articulated around, two centres of exchange and production in the Netherlands and the Swiss Confederation. These five centres of production between them accounted for more than 80 per cent of all

[10] Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 1921), III, 1–178; *idem*, *Zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Büchermesse, 1462–1792* (Frankfurt, 1921); Bruno Recke, *Die Frankfurter Büchermesse* (Frankfurt, 1951).

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books published throughout Europe before 1601, and an even higher proportion of scholarly books and books in Latin.[11]

Outside this central core lay a number of more peripheral markets, in Spain and Portugal, England and southern Italy. These secondary markets were characterised by a relatively robust production serving a vernacular reading community of sufficient size to sustain a printing industry of some significance. But most books published in these places were for local consumption. Because they did not publish extensively for export these places did not command a significant proportion of the production of Latin books. Rather they relied for most scholarly and more expensive editions on imports, supplied through the long-established trade connections with the major centres of production elsewhere in Europe. These import markets worked very effectively, as the large numbers of imported books in early English collections will testify; but the dependence on larger continental centres of production placed a distinct limit on the ambitions of the local printing industry.[12]

Beyond these secondary markets lay a still more remote outer periphery. Most of the lands of northern and eastern Europe belonged to this third outer circle in the first century of print. These were places where printing was often established rather late, and where it struggled to put down firm foundations. The lands of this outmost circle were often relatively sparsely populated, with few towns of any great size, at least compared to the great cities of the more urbanised parts of Europe. Their vernacular reading communities were often too small to justify heavy investment in print technology. To an even greater extent than in Spain and England, the establishment of a printing industry relied on foreign investment and expertise: sometimes books intended for these markets were even printed in the larger printing centres in Germany, Italy or the Netherlands. Faced with these relatively daunting circumstances, sustaining a viable local print industry relied to an unusual extent on the interest of local political elites, who would often support the establishment of a printing press, or sustained it when not strictly viable in economic terms, more from motives of cultural national pride.

The cultural consequences of this very starkly differentiated print network would be very significant. In the larger centres of production

[11] See Appendix.

[12] Lotte Hellinga, 'Importation of Books Printed on the Continent into England and Scotland before c. 1520', in *Printing the Written Word. The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520*, ed. Sandra Hindman (Ithaca, 1991), 205–24; Elizabeth Armstrong, 'English Purchases of Printed Books from the Continent, 1465–1526', *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 268–90; Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of Printed Books into England and Scotland', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, III: *1400–1557*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge, 1999).

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publishers could undertake more ambitious works in a whole variety of fields: not only in the Latin works they placed in the international market, but also in their vernacular production. In the smaller, less highly capitalised print domains, the absence of large-scale print enterprises encouraged a more cautious and conservative approach. Yet, even within this broad pattern there was room for significant local diversity. The development of a local print industry was shaped not only by its part in the international Latin trade, though this was critical, but also by the size of the local vernacular reading community. The attitude of the local governing power was also critical in shaping how print would respond to the different opportunities and dangers posed by political events over the course of the century.

II

The remainder of this paper will explore these questions in greater detail with a comparison of the three most substantial print cultures of north-western Europe: France, England and the Low Countries. The three were closely linked by established trade connections, especially in the book world, where the mutual trade in books was extensive in the manuscript age. But in the sixteenth century each of these three places' experience of print would take a sharply divergent course. France was one of the three major print centres of Europe, home both to northern Europe's largest print metropolis, Paris, but also, as the century wore on, an increasingly vibrant tradition of provincial print. In England, in contrast, a much small print world was concentrated almost entirely in one location, London. The Low Countries present in many respects the most singular case. Here a number of centres generated a large volume of printed books catering explicitly for an international market, and this allowed the publishing houses of the Netherlands to subvert the limitations of a small vernacular reading community. They also succeeded, in the second half of the century, in riding out political storms that might have obliterated a less robust printing culture. These investigations will allow us to elucidate our themes of centre and periphery in two different but interlocking ways: with respect to the European print world as a whole, and with regard to centre and periphery in each individual print domain: here, especially with regard to their largely separate vernacular reading communities.

This work rests on an analysis of data for print production that for many parts of Europe has only recently become possible. It might seem at first sight extraordinary that so much interpretative weight has been placed on 'the coming of the book' in the absence of reliable production

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data.[13] But this is indeed the case. It is only now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, that we are in a position to say with any degree of confidence how many books were published in Europe, where and when.

This salient if surprising truth has been somewhat obscured for historians of the Anglo-American tradition by the early precocious success of bibliography in charting the history of early print in England. It is now eighty years since Pollard and Redgrave first published their *Short Title Catalogue of Books of Books Printed in England and in English Abroad before 1640*. The early publication of this bibliographical milestone has allowed British bibliography to achieve a state of development unrivalled for other parts of Europe, through successive refinements of the STC, the extension of coverage to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and on-line and full text editions.[14]

The study of other sixteenth-century print cultures has lagged seriously behind. We now have a serviceable survey of two of the most significant European print domains of the sixteenth century, the German and Italian.[15] But bibliographical coverage of France and the Netherlands has been fragmented and patchy, and there has been no attempt at all to create a survey of books published on the Iberian peninsula. These substantial lacunae are now finally being made good in a series of projects initiated by the publication in 2007 of a full survey of all books published in French: a substantial body of some 52,000 works.[16] The remarks in this paper, and the overall figures for European production presented in the appendix, are underpinned by the ongoing bibliographical analysis for these projects, timed to conclude in 2012 with an integrated on-line catalogue of all books published throughout Europe before 1601: the *Universal Short Title Catalogue*.

With that, at last, our knowledge of the European world of print will rest on reasonably secure foundations. The U-STC will also make possible a whole new generation of research on texts, authors and genres with trans-national appeal and influence: a class of work whose impact has inevitably been obscured by the fragmentary tendency of the national bibliographical tradition.

[13] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450–1800* (1976).

[14] The English Short-Title Catalogue: http://www.bl.uk/collections/early/estc1.html; Early English Books Online: http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home.

[15] *Edit 16. Le edizioni italiane del XVI secolo: censimento nazionale* (5 vols., Rome: Istituto centrale per il catalogo unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografi che, 1989–), continued as an on-line resource at http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/ihome.htm. *VD 16. Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (25 vols., Stuttgart, 1983–2000). An enhanced version now available on-line at http://bvbd2.bib-bvb.de/cgi-bin/bvb_suche?sid=VD16.

[16] Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby and Alexander Wilkinson, *FB. French Vernacular Books. Books Published in the French Language before 1601* (Leiden, 2007).

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III

It was always likely that France would play a distinguished part in the early history of the printed book. Paris had been one of the major centres of the medieval book world for two centuries before print. The core of this market, which approached industrial mass production, was the market in school books for university students, but the tastes of the Court also ensured a healthy demand for luxury items.[17] Rumours of the new art perfected in Germany thus posed something of a challenge to the French Court, and in 1458 the French king dispatched Nicolas Jensen, one of the leading booksellers of Paris, to Mainz to discover its secrets.[18] The wily Germans proved understandably reluctant to admit Jensen to their confidence; rebuffed, he is next found in Venice where he went on to found a major printing house. It was therefore not until 1470 that print made its way to Paris, and then courtesy of three émigré Germans.

Once print was established, however, France swiftly reclaimed a leading role in the provision of books, both for a local and international market. Within a decade Paris had established a place as one of the major European centres of print: a position it would not relinquish through the next three centuries. Equally remarkable is the speed with which print spread around France. Before the end of the fifteenth century printing presses had been planted in over thirty locations in the Francophone world: not only in the kingdom of France itself, but in Flanders, the Franche Comté (both under Habsburg rule) and the kingdom of Brittany (independent until 1532). In Brittany alone some six places briefly sustained a printing press: here the new art played an important part in celebrating a rich and at this point independent intellectual culture.[19]

Despite this France was not immune from the late century crisis of print. The production of printed books disappeared entirely from over half the places that had experienced print in the fifteenth century, and effectively the production of books was concentrated in a still smaller number of places. Lyon, Rouen and Poitiers, important regional centres, could to some extent sustain a viable press, concentrating for the most part on staples of school books, ecclesiastical texts and local legal handbooks. In the south Toulouse performed a similar function.[20] But in terms of

[17] Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500* (London, 2000).

[18] A thorough review of the evidence concerning this much reported episode is provided by Lotte Hellinga, 'Printing Types and the Printed Word. Considerations around New Insights into the Beginning of Printing', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 57 (2003), cols. 249–65.

[19] Malcolm Walsby, *Books and Book Culture in the First Age of Print: Brittany, 1484–1600* (Leiden, 2009).

[20] *Bibliographie des livres imprimés à Lyon au seizième siècle*, ed. S. von Gültlingen (10 vols., Baden-Baden, 1992–2006). *Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au seizième siècle*

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overall production, in the period Paris emerged as the overwhelmingly dominant centre.

This consolidation of print, characteristic of much of Europe, in no way diminished the impact of French typography in the European book market. Indeed, the concentration of capital and expertise in Paris, and to a lesser extent Lyon, facilitated the production of books of ever greater quality and sophistication. Paris in this period emerged as a recognised centre of high-quality typography: this era saw not only the rise of outstanding printing dynasties, but also significant advances in printing of the learned languages. Parisian printers were also in the vanguard in refining techniques for the publication of musical notation, a development enthusiastically supported by the French king, Francis I.[21]

Paris also played a notable role in the emergence of a market in news publication. It is sometimes suggested that the development of printed news publications was essentially a seventeenth-century phenomenon, but this is an observation based largely on the English experience.[22] Elsewhere in Europe the thirst for information generated a lively market for printed news publications almost from the first years of print.

These were not necessarily ephemeral prints, still less the preserve of marginal figures in the publishing industry.[23] In Paris, until at least the 1530s, most news publications emanated from close to the Court.[24] They played an important role in efforts to engage the political nation in active support of crown policies. Leading Court poets and authors were expected to play their part in hymning the king's triumphs in war and peace.[25] This propaganda offensive reached its apogee in the period 1537–44, when the long-running conflict between Francis I and the

(32 vols., Baden-Baden, 1968–80), V (Poitiers), XX (Toulouse). The bibliography of Caen and Rouen was resigned to a separate section of this project, but remains very incomplete. Pierre Aquilon, *Bibliographie Normande. Bibliographie des ouvrages imprimés à Caen et à Rouen au seizième siècle* (Répertoire bibliographique des livres imprimés en France au seizième siècle. Fascicule hors série, 1992). These projects are now substantially superseded by *French Vernacular Books*.

[21] Daniel Heartz, *Pierre Attaingnant, Royal Printer of Music: A Historical Study and Bibliographical Catalogue* (Berkeley, CA, 1969).

[22] Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 25.

[23] As is demonstrated also for Germany by the important book of Hans-Jörg Kunast, *'Getruckt zu Auspurg'. Buchdruck und Buchhandel in Augsburg zwischen 1468 und 1555* (Tübingen, 1997).

[24] Jean-Pierre Seguin, 'L'information à la fin du XVe siècle en France. Pièces d'actualité imprimées sous le règne de Charles VIII', *Arts et traditions populaires*, 4 (1956), 309–30, 1–2 (1957), 46–74; *idem*, *L'information en France de Louis XII à Henri II* (Geneva, 1961); Michael Sherman, 'Political Propaganda and Renaissance Culture: French Reactions to the League of Cambrai, 1509–1510', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 8 (1977), 97–128, an article based on material drawn from his unpublished dissertation: 'The Selling of Louis XII: Propaganda and Popular Culture in Renaissance France' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago 1974).

[25] Jennifer Britnell, *Jean Bouchet* (Edinburgh, 1986).

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emperor, Charles V, reached its most intense phase. In this period the numerous pamphlets charting the ebb and flow of the conflict even found their echo in the provincial press, anticipating the greater upsurge of pamphlet publications in the second half of the century.[26]

In these decades Lyon also established itself as a second major printing centre within France.[27] As a print town Lyon had many advantages. Strategically placed along several of Europe's major trade routes, it was a gateway to commerce towards both Italy and Spain.[28] The establishment of a major printing industry indeed owed much to a number of émigré Italian merchant families, who brought with them the capital resources necessary for the production of high-quality printed works. Lyon also quickly established a significant reputation in several important markets, such as the production of texts of Roman law, and modern humanist works of scholarship.

The production of books in Paris and Lyon in the twenty years after 1540 – elegant in appearance, varied in scope and immensely profitable – gives a fair indication of how the French book world might have remained but for the mid-century crisis that stimulated the French Wars of Religion. It is of course in marked contrast to the situation in Germany – and our familiar paradigm of print and Reformation – that the impact of Protestantism on the French printing industry should have been so long delayed. There had been interest in the German controversies, especially in Paris, in the years immediately following Luther's protest. But conservative opinion rallied quickly to inhibit the expression of evangelical views. Paris's publishing community was warned off the printing or sale of Luther's works, and from 1525 the publication of the Scripture in the vernacular was also forbidden. Few were prepared to risk their livelihoods by challenging the ban; the publication of Protestant books (and editions of the Bible in French) necessarily moved abroad.[29] In fact only very modest amounts of evangelical literature in French were published before the 1540s, when Calvin's definitive establishment in Geneva permitted the establishment of a new centre for the production of Protestant texts.

[26] Andrew Pettegree, 'A Provincial News Community in Sixteenth-Century France', in his *The French Book and the European Book World* (Leiden, 2007), 19–42. For the equally energetic propaganda on the Imperial side see now Steven Gunn, David Grummitt and Hans Cools, *War, State, and Society in England and the Netherlands 1477–1559* (Oxford, 2007), ch. 18.

[27] Gültlingen, *Bibliographie des livres imprimés à Lyon*, replacing H.-L. and J. Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise. Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVIe siècle* (12 vols., Lyon, 1895–1921).

[28] James B. Wadsworth, *Lyon 1473–1503. The Beginnings of Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1962); Richard Gascon, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVIe siècle: Lyon et ses marchands (environs de 1520 – environs de 1580)* (Paris, 1971).

[29] *Le livre évangélique en français avant Calvin*, ed. Jean-François Gilmont and William Kemp (Turnhout, 2004); B. T. Chambers, *Bibliography of French Bibles. Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century French-Language Editions of the Scriptures* (Geneva, 1983).

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For the next two decades Geneva completely dominated the output of Protestant literature in French, to the fury of the royal authorities, who took stern measures to inhibit all contact with the town.[30]

All this changed very rapidly with the crisis of the French monarchy that followed the death of Henry II in 1559. Events gave French Protestantism its opportunity; the evangelical churches grew very rapidly. Protestant printing also increased exponentially, and, crucially, moved back within the borders of France. Major Protestant presses were established in Lyon, Orléans, at Caen in Normandy and, more discreetly, within Paris itself.[31] But most of the capital's printers remained loyal to Catholicism. Crucially, and again in marked contrast to Germany, the evangelicals did not dominate the printing press. Rather, the crisis of 1559–64 produced a torrent of passionate polemic on both sides of the religious divide. Catholic authors matched their Protestant opponents tract for tract, sermon for sermon.[32] The fierce and murderous passions unleashed during the French wars had their origins in these polemical exchanges.[33]

The end of the first war in 1563 fatally interrupted the momentum of Protestant growth. Catholic France had rallied effectively; although the French wars would drag on another forty years, the outcome was never seriously in doubt. For the crown the issue was how to heal the wound opened by the conflict, and promote harmony between an enflamed Catholic majority and an entrenched Protestant minority. To this purpose they made much use of the press.

Through 1564 and 1565 the regent, Catherine of Medici, toured the nation, introducing the young king to his people, and promoting reconciliation. This involved numerous edicts and proclamations, and these were published not only in Paris and Lyon, but in numerous other locations throughout the kingdom. This process, pursued through

[30] Jean-François Gilmont, *Le livre réformé au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 2005). The output of Genevan editions is now fully documented in Gilmont's on-line bibliography of Genevan imprints GLN 15–16, www.ville-ge.ch/bge/bibelec/e/gln15–16.htm.

[31] Louis Desgraves, *Elie Gibier imprimeur à Orléans (1536–1588)* (Geneva, 1966); the different editions of Gibier's political tracts are more precisely identified in Jean-François Gilmont, 'La première diffusion des Mémoires de Condé par Éloi Gibier en 1562–1563', in his *Le livre & ses secrets* (Louvain-la-Neuve and Geneva, 2003), 191–216. For Lyon and Caen see now Pettegree, *The French Book and the European Book World*, chs. 3 and 4. For Paris, Eugénie Droz, 'Le curé Landry et les frères Langelier', in E. Droz, *Chemins de l'heresie: textes et documents* (4 vols., Geneva, 1970–6), I, 283–394.

[32] Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot, 2002); Émile Pasquier, *Un curé de Paris pendant les guerres de religion: René Benoist, le pape des Halles* (Paris, 1913).

[33] Natalie Davis, 'The Rites of Violence', in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (1975), 152–87; Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York, 1991).

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several subsequent eruptions of hostilities and repeated efforts to fashion a lasting peace, stimulated a new beginning for provincial printing in France. The crown's wishes were relayed through a network of newly established printing houses in places like Tours, Orléans, Bordeaux, Dijon and Bourges. It is easy to overlook the importance of this apparently mundane trade in small official ordinances: usually, in France, octavo pamphlets rather than broadsheet placards. But for printers such work was often the mainstay of their trade.[34] Once reestablished they quickly developed a secondary market in pamphlets retailing the convolutions of the tangled conflict, the sieges, battles and the fate of prominent casualties.

This renewed pamphlet publication reached its apogee with the tumultuous triangular conflict between Henry of Navarre, the Catholic League and the embattled king, Henry III. When the king made a last desperate effort to reassert his authority by assassinating the leader of the League, the duke of Guise, the shock waves of this treacherous act reverberated through the French press.[35] Months later the same presses celebrated the king's own assassination. This unlikely series of events brought the Protestant Henry of Navarre to the throne but he faced a kingdom reluctant to accept his authority. Among his many problems in making good his rights was the fact that his leaguer enemies controlled every major printing centre throughout the kingdom, including Paris, Lyon, Rouen and Toulouse. Henry's response was to establish his own presses in smaller loyalist towns.[36] Over the next five years the military struggle for supremacy was accompanied by a parallel polemical warfare in the public prints.

The accumulated impact of the French conflicts was thus to effect a profound and lasting transformation in the nature and locus of French printing. The domination of Paris, never entirely complete, was in the second half of the century eroded by a revitalised provincial press. By the last decades of the century these presses were responsible for a substantial proportion of the total printed output. Events also effected a transformation of the industry so that it would now serve both the established market for high-quality and scholarly books, and an animated local industry dealing in news, official mandates and current events. This dense network of printing towns was in marked contrast to the situation that would prevail across the Channel in England.

[34] See *Répertoire bibliographique*, XXVIII, 87–93, for the Le Mans printer Jêrome Olivier whose output was utterly dominated in the 1560s by the production of local reprints of royal edicts.

[35] Denis Pallier, *Recherches sur l'imprimerie à Paris pendant le Ligue (1585–1594)* (Geneva, 1975).

[36] As for instance at Tours: *Répertoire bibliographique*, XXIII.

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IV

In its first beginnings the introduction of print in England conformed reasonably closely to the normative experience of Europe. Print was introduced to England by William Caxton, an imaginative merchant and diplomat who had experience of the book trade in Bruges, a major centre of commerce and, not coincidentally, of the medieval manuscript trade.[37] In his zeal to bring printing to England Caxton, as was often the case, made liberal use of the expertise of those with experience of printing in the newly established continental houses: this established a pattern that would continue for much of first century of English print, with workmen from Germany, France and the Low Countries playing an influential role in the establishment and development of printing houses in England's capital.[38] Caxton introduced his first printing press at Westminster in 1476. A press was established in Oxford in 1478 and in St Albans the following year. But neither of these ventures could be sustained. Within a decade both the Oxford and St Albans press had failed, and henceforth the craft of printing would be concentrated almost entirely in the capital.

The failure of undercapitalised provincial presses was not, as we have seen, unusual in the last two decades of the fifteenth century, the years following the first exuberant age of expansion. But it was only in England that provincial printing died out altogether. In the four decades between 1500 and 1540, the period during which the early printed book achieved its final, definitive form, the domination of London over the English book trade was complete. Attempts to revive printing in York and St Albans lasted scarcely a year. Even the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge, with their healthy markets for educational texts, could not sustain a printing press.[39] For the very first time the English printing industry embarked on a course that was utterly at variance with the mainstream experience of European print.

There are several plausible reasons why this should have been so, but the most fundamental was the failure to establish a substantial part in the production of books for the international Latin trade. Where printing survived, and sometimes flourished, away from the emerging centres of production along the Rhine, then this local trade was sustained, very

[37] George D. Painter, *William Caxton: A Quincentenary Biography of England's First Printer* (1976); Janet Backhouse, Mirjam Foot and John Barr, *William Caxton: An Exhibition to Commemorate the Quincentenary of the Introduction of Printing into England* (1976). The most recent list of Caxton editions is in Paul Needham, *The Printer & the Pardoner: An Unrecorded Indulgence Printed by William Caxton for the Hospital of St. Mary Rounceval, Charing Cross* (Washington, 1986).

[38] E. Gordon Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade: Short Notices of All Printers, Stationers, Book-Binders and Others Connected with it from the Issue of the First Dated Book in 1475 to the Incorporation of the Company of Stationers in 1557* (1905).

[39] William K. Sessions, *A Printer's Dozen: The First British Printing Centres to 1557, after Westminster and London* (York, 1983).

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largely, by local production of books in Latin. This was so of France, and would be so of the Netherlands, as we shall see.[40] If England's publishers were forced to rely largely on the vernacular trade, then the volume would be small, given that the community of those who required books in English was relatively restricted. It meant that English publishers would take only a modest role in an exceptionally valuable part of the book trade: the steady recurrent trade in school books, and the production of liturgies and Books of Hours. These were a staple part of the trade in books in the manuscript era, and would be also in the new age of print.[41] A common feature of the book trade across Europe was that the profits created by easy best sellers helped create venture capital for other projects. Yet so swiftly did England's printers lose ground to continental competitors that it soon became convenient to print abroad liturgical works with a largely, if not exclusively, English market, such as books according to the Sarum rite. Books of Hours for England were printed extensively in Paris and Rouen, in the Low Countries and as far away as Venice, though often with the name of a London bookseller on the title-page (which is why many are listed in the English STC).[42]

If English printers were limited to the relatively slim pickings of the vernacular market, then other constraints soon emerged. A large part of this residual market was made up by what one might broadly describe as official publications: proclamations, statute books and later church orders and service books. Publications of this nature made up the undramatic bedrock of the trade in many parts of Europe, and the right to publish such works was keenly sought after. By and large they offered steady returns, particularly the most ephemeral edicts and proclamations, where the entire print run was often supplied to a single client.[43] But this close relationship with officialdom imposed its own limitations, since printers and publishers who enjoyed such patronage were unlikely to take on any project that would jeopardise the continuing flow of work. If one considers that the London print fraternity was in any case small, where everyone tended to know everyone else's business, then there was little incentive for a printer to involve themselves with disapproved, or, after

[40] P. M. H. Cuijpers, *Teksen als koopwaar: vroege drukkers verkennen de markt* (Amsterdam, 1998).

[41] Mary C. Erler, 'Devotional Literature', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, III, ed. Hellinga and Trapp, 495–525; Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven, 2006).

[42] Erler, 'Devotional Literature', 501ff. A search of the electronic version of the E-STC (02.2008) produced 150 hits for Rouen and 86 for Paris. Most are Sarum Missals, or Books of Hours, in English or Latin. In the Henrician period many were produced for the London based Cologne printer/ bookseller Arnold Birckman.

[43] For England, numerous examples in Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (3 vols., New Haven, 1964–9), e.g. I, nos. 73, 181 (warrants for payment to R. Pynson), 128, 151 (Thomas Berthelet).

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the Reformation, heretical, publications. This was even more the case when one considers that all printing paper was imported, and therefore passed through the well-regulated Tudor ports.[44] Even if members of the printing fraternity had had some sympathy with Protestantism, few would have been prepared to risk their existing business. And for any newcomer tempted to set up specifically to print evangelical literature, accumulating type, ink and paper, let alone printing heretical texts unobserved, was logistically almost inconceivable.

Thus it was that at the point that the eruptions caused by Martin Luther were transforming the print industry in central Europe, London's printers were unable to take advantage of the economic opportunities that presented themselves. In two decades during which Wittenberg was transformed from a sleepy backwater to one of Europe's major print capitals, demand for evangelical books in English was met largely by printers abroad – mostly in Antwerp.[45]

That London's printers did include many with sympathy for the new doctrines was amply demonstrated during the reign of Edward VI, when the new regime not only removed restrictions on printing, but actively encouraged the publication of works of Protestant theology.[46] The reign of Edward VI also saw the only significant attempt to encourage provincial printing in England. During the course of 1547–8 presses were established in four strategic locations outside the capital, at Canterbury, Ipswich, Worcester and Dublin.[47] But this experiment was short-lived. When Mary Tudor ascended the throne in 1553, all of these presses were forced to close; English provincial towns would play no further significant role in the production of printed books until the end of the eighteenth century.

The new Marian government made a determined effort to control the English printing industry. The new regime had dealt the industry a shrewd blow by requiring all non-naturalised foreigners to leave the country, since many of the more prominent London printers relied heavily on foreign expertise in their workshops; some, indeed, chose to join the expelled foreigners in withdrawing to the continent. A further decisive moment came in 1557, when the king and queen issued a charter that completed

[44] Rhys Jenkins, *Paper-making in England, 1495–1788* (1958).

[45] For English printing in Antwerp see *Antwerp. Dissident Typographical Centre. The Role of Antwerp Printers in the Religious Conflicts in England (16th Century)* (Antwerp, 1994); Willem Heijting, 'Early Reformation Literature from the Printing Shop of Mattheus Crom and Steven Mierdman', *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, 74 (1994), 143–61.

[46] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (1999); John N. King, 'John Day: Master Printer of the English Reformation', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge, 2002), 180–208.

[47] Sessions, *A Printer's Dozen*; *idem*, *The First Printers at Ipswich in 1547 and Worcester, 1549–1553* (York, 1984); Janet Freeman, 'John Oswen', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

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the formal organisation of the craft of printing under the control of the Stationers' Company of London.[48]

In itself the instinct for control did not mark out the English situation from that of other European nations. All over Europe printers and publishers, assessing the investment required to bring a new book to the market, wanted the assurance that this market would not be spoiled by a second, competing edition. This prompted the development, in each printing market of Europe, of a system of privilege, granting printers exclusive rights to a text, or class of texts, in which they had invested.[49] What was unique to the English case was the delegation of these responsibilities to a single commercial body. In addition the Stationers were given national powers of regulation and search. These two peculiarities of the English system put astonishing power in the hands of a single trade guild. How they would exercise this power would shape the English book market for centuries ahead.

But first the Stationers had to negotiate one final convolution of English politics, with the death, a mere year after the Charter had been granted, of their patroness, Queen Mary. But the new queen stopped short of reinstating the experiment in press freedom that had characterised the Edwardian years. Rather, in 1559 the new administration issued Articles that not only confirmed the Stationers' charter, but further reinforced their control over the industry. The Articles of 1559 extended the Stationers' control over booksellers, and ordered that all books to be published in London should first be registered with the Company. Further proclamations of 1566 and 1580 reaffirmed the ban on unauthorised printing. A new order of 1586 made explicit the ban of printing outside the capital, with the exception of one press each in Oxford and Cambridge. In 1605 the Company added the monopoly in the production of Common Law books, and in due course also the right to print Bibles; the University presses were paid a cash fee not to enter into competition with the Stationers in this respect. These negotiations were the climax of an immensely successful period, during which the Stationers' Company entrenched its position at the heart of the English book trade.[50] It is interesting to consider what impact this very particular history – both with respect to the Stationers and other developments – had on the intellectual life of England during this period.

First, it must be noted that by European standards the English book world remained very small. The regulations of 1586 put a limit on the

[48] Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: A History, 1403–1959* (1960).

[49] Elizabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System 1498–1526* (Cambridge, 1990).

[50] Blagden, *Stationers' Company*, 92–5; James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450–1850* (New Haven, 2007), 73–4.

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number of printing houses to be permitted in London: only twenty. This limit was reiterated by the regulations of 1615, which further elucidated that of twenty printing houses, fourteen might run two presses and the other six just one. This created an upper limit of thirty-four presses operating, to meet the needs of the whole kingdom. This was only marginally more than had been authorised in the single city of Geneva in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, or, indeed, than the twenty-four presses operated by the single firm of Plantin in Antwerp in the 1580s.[51] Even so, according to James Raven, these regulations may not have been unduly restrictive, since his survey of output for this period suggests that even this limited number of presses would not have been running at full capacity.[52] All told English presses account for 1.5 per cent of the editions published throughout Europe before 1501; and around 4 per cent of those produced in the sixteenth century.[53]

Secondly the English industry was characterised by a unique degree of concentration on one centre of production: London. This was the single respect in which England deviated most entirely from the European norm. Provincial printing was almost negligible: in fact there were more books printed for the English market abroad than there were books printed in England outside the capital.[54] Production was also concentrated very heavily on vernacular books. Vernacular titles outnumbered Latin by over 5:1, against a European norm nearer 1:1. The consequence of this was that for England the trade in learned texts was essentially an import trade. And this trade was very largely one way: there was no substantial export trade to balance the books. To make an international impact English authors had generally to be published abroad, and in Latin. This was certainly possible, as John Fisher would demonstrate in the early Reformation controversies.[55] And one could certainly make a case that the size and organisation of the industry did not impact greatly on the range of books available to English readers. English libraries and collectors availed themselves freely of the easy and long-established connections with the continent to obtain the best books that continental suppliers had to offer. The accounts of the Plantin press in Antwerp reveal regular transactions with a large range of London booksellers, supplying

[51] Colin Clair, *Christopher Plantin* (1960).

[52] Raven, *The Business of Books*, 46–9.

[53] See Appendix.

[54] By a margin of more than two to one; search of the electronic version of the STC (2.2008) yielded 469 books printed before 1601 in England outside London or Westminster, and 1,122 books printed abroad.

[55] M. A. Shaaber, *Check-List of Works of British Authors Printed Abroad, in Languages other than English, to 1641* (New York, 1975), nos. 41–103. Fisher's works were also translated into German and Dutch.

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especially maps and topographical works not published in England.[56] Leedham-Green's Cambridge inventories and the English Renaissance Libraries series reveal that students in Oxford and Cambridge had little difficulty in obtaining such books as they required.[57]

It was more in the range of books available in the vernacular trade that the particular circumstances of the English market had most impact. The management of the trade by the Stationers' Company encouraged a definite conservatism. The trade was very heavily concentrated on religious books. But London's output was conspicuously low in several areas which formed an important part of the European vernacular trade. One area of the market that seems somewhat underdeveloped in England was what one might call polite recreational literature. Domestic readers could avail themselves of any number of sermons, but more secular pleasures were not catered for with such assiduous care. Major milestones of European literature made their way into English only very haltingly. Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was not translated into English until 1591, Machiavelli's *The Prince* was not rendered into English until 1640.[58] The market in news print also seems to have been substantially less developed in England than in continental places; a consequence, in part, of the absence of provincial presses. England also lagged substantially behind in what one might describe as the scholarly vernacular: books of science, mathematics, topography, botany and medicine aimed at a vernacular audience. This was a direct result of the relative size of the London industry, which simply did not generate the capital resources necessary for such projects.

V

The case could be made that the differences identified between France and England were to some extent inevitable. France was a nation of many more million inhabitants and many substantial towns. The vernacular reading community extended over the borders to the Low Countries and parts of the Empire. This accounts for some, but not all, of the differences. It was not inevitable that France would appropriate so significant a share in Latin production, but it had very significant consequences for the overall sophistication of the French print world. In any case, any easy determinism is subverted by the undoubted success of print in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. The Seventeen Provinces boasted a population of less than two million, and the larger of its two

[56] Colin Clair, 'Christopher Plantin's Trade Connections with England and Scotland', *The Library*, 5th ser., 14 (1959), 28–45.

[57] E. S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book Lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1986).

[58] STC 746 (Ariosto), 17168 (Machiavelli).

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vernacular reading communities (Dutch) was much smaller than this. Nevertheless the publishers of Flanders and Holland appropriated a significant proportion of Europe's printing trade, a role they sustained in often adverse and difficult political circumstances.

Print was established in the Low Countries at an early date. Given all that we know about the vibrancy of schools' culture and commerce in the Low Countries this is hardly a surprise, and the Netherlands would soon emerge as an important centre of print. The first dated editions published in the Low Countries appeared at Alost, a small town in Flanders, and Utrecht, both in 1473. Yet interestingly, print seems from a very early stage to have pursued two divergent courses, reflecting different strands of interest in the new art. In the commercial towns of the south, printers specialised in the types of books popular with the nobility and wealthy merchants, chivalric romances, moralities and chronicles.[59] This was notably so in the case of Bruges, a major centre of the medieval manuscript trade, where Colard Mansion established his shop. Other presses were established in Brussels, at Louvain, where the university sustained demand, and at Antwerp. In the north, Utrecht soon ceded primacy to Deventer, where the copying trade of the Brethren of the Common Life promised an established market in school books. This became a foundation stone of the trade in the north: the bibliography of Low Countries' incunabula lists an astonishing 280 surviving examples of the two staples of the school curriculum, the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa Dei and the *Ars Minor* of Donatus.[60] Presses were also established in other towns with notable schools, such as Zwolle, Nijmegen and 's Hertogenbosch.

These strongly developed specialised markets allowed regional print in the Netherlands to resist the full impact of two potentially destructive tendencies: the late fifteenth-century crisis of European print, and the magnetic pull of the emerging print metropolis, Antwerp. Printing in the dispersed towns of the north was not entirely immune from these tendencies. Print shops in Delft, Haarlem and Bruges ceased operation; Gerard Leeu moved his press from Gouda to Antwerp; even Pafraet in Deventer was forced temporarily to close his doors. Nevertheless it was not until the 1520s that Antwerp's proportion of the print production of the Netherlands reached 50 per cent, and Antwerp never attained the total domination of the market that Paris had temporarily achieved in the early sixteenth century, and London on a permanent basis.[61] Regional print centres of some importance survived, largely through the pursuit

[59] Wytze Gs Hellinga, *Copy and Print in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, 1962), 11–13.

[60] Gerard van Thielen and John Goldfinch, *Incunabula Printing in the Low Countries* (Nieuwkoop, 1999), nos. 85–214, 739–886.

[61] Cuijpers, *Teksten als koopwaar*, 71–4.

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of significant specialism: Latin theological works in the case of Louvain, school books in the case of Deventer. At Louvain, in particular, Thierry Martens conducted a business of some significance, turning out numerous editions of the classics and modern authors.[62] He was the first to introduce italic type in the Netherlands, and also experimented with Greek and Hebrew characters; he also enjoyed the patronage of Erasmus for editions of his works published in the Netherlands. Martens's spiritual heir was Rutgerus Rescius, the learned scholar/printer who from 1518 occupied the Chair of Greek at the Trilingual College in Louvain.[63] Although Deventer's influence would fade in the second half of the century, other northern print towns would emerge to take its place.[64]

Antwerp's influence in the print culture of the Netherlands was nevertheless significant and growing. The print metropolis on the Scheldt also developed significant specialisms of its own. Reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of its mercantile population, the city became a precocious centre of news publications, relaying first intelligence of events in central Europe and the Orient to a local audience, and also, at one remove, to France and England.[65] The connections with the English book market were particularly close and long established. It is therefore no surprise that when the English authorities moved to impede publication of evangelical texts, Antwerp became a major centre of production for Protestant works in English, destined for clandestine distribution across the Channel. This is all the more remarkable given the stringent measures enacted against the publication of heretical literature for domestic consumption. It was, for Charles V, emperor and hereditary ruler of the Low Countries, a matter of personal honour to ensure that the Lutheran heresies did not secure a foothold. This was no small task. Luther's teaching found a distinct resonance in the towns of the Netherlands and his works were discussed, and initially published, quite freely.[66] To inhibit the spread of heresy Charles V insisted on the enactment of a range of controls over the printing and dissemination of heretical books as stringent as any in Europe.[67] From 1530 the possession of unauthorised texts was a capital crime. Printers found to have printed

[62] *Dirk Martens, 1473–1973* (Aalst, 1973); Anne Rouzet, *Dictionaire des imprimeurs, libraires et éditeurs des XVe et XVe siècles dans les limites géographiques de la Belgique actuelle* (Nieuwkoop, 1975), 140–3.

[63] Rouzet, *Dictionaire*, 186–7.

[64] Paul Valkema Blouw, *Typographia Batava 1541–1600: repertorium van boeken gedrukt in Nederland tussen 1541 en 1600* (2 vols., Nieuwkoop, 1998).

[65] Carl Göllner, *Turcica: Die europäischen Türkendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts. I. Band MDI–MDL* (Berlin, 1961).

[66] C. Ch. G. Visser, *Luther's geschriften in de nederlanden tot 1546* (Assen, 1969).

[67] Alastair Duke, 'Building Heaven in Hell's Despite: The Early History of the Reformation in the Towns of the Low Countries', in his *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (1990), 71–100.

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such items could expect severe treatment. From 1546 the emperor, in cooperation with the University of Louvain, issued detailed lists of texts and authors that could not be read or published.[68]

Despite these measures, the control of the output of presses in the Netherlands was extremely patchy. In truth the continuing diversity of printing in the Netherlands, spread through more than a score of different centres, made control of heretical printing far more difficult than in places where print culture was more centralised. It is also relevant that the publication of the Bible in vernacular languages was not specifically forbidden, as was the case in France. In consequence Antwerp was able to capture a significant part of this market, publishing Bibles and New Testaments in French, English and Danish, as well as in Dutch and Latin.[69] The first Dutch translation based on an evangelical model was published in 1526, and this was the first of a sequence of distinguished translations intended for a public eager to embrace the reading of Scripture.

The erosion of royal authority after Philip II's departure for Spain in 1559, together with the rise of Calvinism, precipitated a political crisis that resulted, in 1566, in the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt. Not surprisingly these events brought an immediate reaction from the press. Printers, both within and outside the Netherlands, turned out multiple editions of the rebel manifestos, and of catechisms, Psalters and church orders for the rapidly growing evangelical congregations.[70] The first revolt was quickly extinguished, but the polemical fury of 1566 established a pattern that would continue for much of the century. Over three decades when the rebellion first established a foothold back in Holland, then painfully established a free northern state, the printing presses of Antwerp, Brussels and latterly Leiden and Amsterdam chronicled each twist and turn of events. Alongside the manifestos and denunciations of the opposing parties, a large part of this literature was made up of official publications: orders of the king, his successive viceroys and later the States General, acting as a *de facto* independent sovereign power.[71] The magistrates in Antwerp also made extensive use of print in their administration of the city.[72] Although much of this regulatory literature

[68] J. M. de Bujanda *et al.*, *Index de l'Université de Louvain, 1546, 1550, 1558* (Geneva, 1986).

[69] A. A. Den Hollander, *De Nederlandse Bijbelvertalingen, 1522–1545* (Nieuwkoop, 1997); Chambers, *Bibliography of French Bibles*.

[70] W. Heijting, *De catechismi en confessies in de Nederlandse Reformatie tot 1585* (2 vols. Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1989).

[71] W. P. C. Knuttel, *Catalogus van de pamfletten-verzameling berustende in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (9 vols., The Hague, 1882–1920); Valkema Blouw, *Typographia Batava 1541–1600*; Elly Cockx-Indestege, Geneviève Glorieux and Bart op de Beeck, *Belgica typographica 1541–1600: catalogus librorum impressorum ab anno MDXLI ad annum MDC in regionibus quae nunc Regni Belgarum partes sunt* (Nieuwkoop, 1968–94).

[72] Léon Voet, *The Plantin Press (1555–1589): A Bibliography of the Works Printed and Published by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp and Leiden* (6 vols., Amsterdam, 1980–3), I, 89–157 (nos. 68–569).

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was a direct consequence of the turbulence of war, a lot was of a more mundane character, reflecting the growing power and administrative reach of officialdom. This was a common feature of administration throughout Europe, and print became a powerful auxiliary tool. In the Netherlands much of this official literature was also devoted to the regulation of commerce: a reflection of its special position as a fulcrum of European trade.

It says much both for the resilience of the local economy and the special place of the Low Countries in Europe's scholarly networks that local printers continued, through all the disruptions of war, to command a major portion of the market in serious scholarly literature.[73] By the second half of the century the Low Countries had become the leaders in the production of high-quality woodcuts and copper-plate engravings.[74] And Antwerp had by this point become a major gathering place for scholars and those engaged in experimental investigations, many attracted by the religious eclecticism of its mercantile culture.

In the second half of the century this market in high-quality publications is inevitably associated with the printing house of Christophe Plantin. Plantin, originally an immigrant from France, first established a press in Antwerp in 1555.[75] He quickly established a profitable specialism in several genres in which Antwerp already excelled, such as small format versions of the classics and popular modern literature. An unwise flirtation with forbidden evangelical texts almost brought shipwreck, but despite a potentially ruinous financial penalty Plantin found investors willing to help rebuild his business. Through the 1570s and 1580s Plantin built a publishing house that matched any in Europe. At its peak the workshop at the House of the Golden Compasses sustained twenty-four presses. Plantin matched this prodigious output with a keen business sense, and a restless ambition to publish books of outstanding aesthetic quality. So while the firm and its agents in Paris, London and Frankfurt moved phenomenal quantities of books on to the international market, Plantin himself was increasingly preoccupied with projects that would secure his reputation.[76] Much of his profits were invested in a long-term contract to supply liturgical books to Spain, a contract for which

[73] A. Geerebaert, 'De Antwerpse uitgevers en de Nederlandsche vertalingen van klassieke schrijvers in de XVIe eeuw', *De Gulden Passer*, 3 (1925), 131–48.

[74] Karen L. Bowen and Dirk Imhof, *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2008); Jan Van der Stock, *Printing Images in Antwerp. The Introduction of Printmaking in a City: Fifteenth Century to 1585* (Rotterdam, 1998).

[75] Clair, *Plantin*; Léon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1969–72).

[76] R. Lauwaert, 'De handelsbedrijvigheid van de Officina Plantiniana op de Buchermessen te Frankfurt am Main in de XVIe eeuw', *De Gulden Passer*, 50 (1972), 124–80, 51 (1973), 70–105.

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Plantin never received more than a fraction of the promised payment. His masterwork, the magnificent Polyglot Bible, was an enterprise equally fraught.[77] The book was eighteen months in the press, and cannot have recouped more than a fraction of the money Plantin invested in the project. Yet Plantin had no regrets. The Polyglot Bible was a literary and scholarly achievement that sealed the reputation of its printer, and confirmed Antwerp's status as the capital of the northern Renaissance.

For all the lustre of such prestigious ventures, the steady bedrock of profit came from more mundane projects. Antwerp's place in the world of commerce not only greatly assisted the circulation of books around Europe's market places, it also created a market for certain specific categories of books. From early in the century the Netherlands took a leading role in the publication of books of exchange: documenting coins in circulation and their relative values, often with illustrative woodcuts. Later printers developed a lucrative new line in dictionaries and phrase books, often with a choice of phrases specifically directed towards the needs of merchants.[78] For those wishing to improve their command of these languages printers in the Netherlands also developed a range of literary texts, with texts in two, three or even four languages arranged in parallel across two facing pages.[79]

Antwerp's place at the crossroads of many voyages also allowed its printers to gain a foothold in many distant markets. Antwerp's printers published books in more than fifteen different languages, including several vernaculars not native to the Low Countries. Books were published in German, Italian, Swedish and Danish, as well as the large trade in Spanish and English books.[80] As a result of the religious controversies of the Reformation, Netherlandish printers commanded a not insignificant portion of the English market, publishing Protestant books in the first half of the century, and Catholic recusant works during the reign of Elizabeth.[81] Spain represented a major export market for printers in the

[77] Clair, *Plantin*, 57–86.

[78] J. Hoock and P. Jeannin, *Ars Mercatoria. Handbücher und Traktate für den Gebrauch des Kaufmanns*, I (Zurich, 1991).

[79] Pettegree, 'Translation and the Migration of Texts', in *French Book and the European Book World*, 216–17.

[80] Voet, *Plantin Press*, VI, 2521–56; Wouter Nijhoff and Maria Elizabeth Kronenberg, *Nederlandsche bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540* (3 vols., 's-Gravenhage, 1965–71; reprint of The Hague, 1919–42), for the editions in the first part of the century. The editions published in Danish, mostly in Antwerp between 1529 and 1531, are listed in L. Nielsen, *Dansk bibliografi 1482–1550* (Copenhagen, 1919), nos. 271–2 (editions of the New Testament), 146, 147, 155, 158, 159 (Luther translations), 22, 215.

[81] A. F. Allison and D. M. Rogers, *A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England, 1558–1640* (1968); *idem*, *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640: An Annotated Catalogue* (2 vols., Aldershot, 1989–94).

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Netherlands.[82] The two most important figures in this trade were Martin Nutius and Christophe Plantin. Nutius, later succeeded by his widow and then his son Philip, may be credited with developing this important trade.[83] Later Plantin would supply the Spanish market with enormous quantities of liturgical books under exclusive contract. The volume of this production, to which Plantin devoted twelve presses between 1571 and 1576, was stupendous. In these six years, according to his very precise reckoning, he shipped some 47,445 Breviaries, Missals, Books of Hours and Hymnals to the peninsula.[84]

In 1585, after a long siege, the city of Antwerp capitulated to the armies of the duke of Parma, and returned to Spanish obedience. Printers and members of the ancillary book trades were among the many thousands who left the south and settled in Holland; the close blockade maintained by the rebel provinces was a further inducement to abandon the former Scheldt metropolis.[85] The impending catastrophe had already induced the ever shrewd Plantin to establish a branch of his business in Leiden, where printing had been reestablished along with the foundation of a new university in 1575. Although Plantin himself moved back to spend his last years in Antwerp, the Leiden branch continued under the management of his son-in-law, Raphelenghien. The presence of the university, and a notably distinguished cadre of professors, allowed Leiden to become a major centre of scholarly publishing. Other notable publishing ventures flourished in Holland in these years in Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Delft and Haarlem, and elsewhere in the United Provinces at Franeker, Leeuwarden, Kampen, Deventer and Utrecht. In Franeker the distinguished Academy provided a steady line of work in the publication of academic dissertations.[86] At the other geographical extremity, in Middelberg in Zeeland, Richard Schilders continued the established tradition of publishing for critics of the English church, in this case Puritan adversaries of the Anglican establishment. In all, more than twenty towns in the north found a place on the printing map of the Low Countries in the last two decades of the century.

[82] Jean Peeters-Fontainas, *Bibliographie des impressions espagnoles des Pays-Bas méridionaux* (2 vols., Nieuwkoop, 1965), lists 600 editions printed in Spanish in the sixteenth-century Low Countries.

[83] Jean Peeters-Fontainas, *L'officine espagnole de Martin Nutius à Anvers* (Antwerp, 1957); B. A. Vermaseren, 'De Spaanse uitgaven op godsdienstig gebied van M. Nutius en J. Steelsius', *De Gulden Passer*, 50 (1972), 26–99.

[84] Clair, *Plantin*, 87–104.

[85] J. G. C. A. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers en boekverkopers in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden omstreeks 1570–1630: een bijdrage tot de kennis van de geschiedenis van het boek* (Nieuwkoop, 1974).

[86] Ferenc Postma, *Auditorium Academiae Franekerensis. Bibliographie der Reden. Disputationen und Gelegenheitsdruckwerke der Universität und des Athenäums in Franeker 1585–1843* (Leeuwarden, 1995).

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The success of printers in the Netherlands was based on a number of complementary factors. They boldly appropriated markets in which they had no natural place. They shrewdly developed special niche markets, although the largest printers were also notable generalists. They exploited their position at the hub of Europe's commerce both for distribution and transportation of books, and to develop new types of publication specifically for merchant readers. Finally they applied their experience of complex financial transactions to underwrite some of Europe's finest and most ambitious printing projects. In these ways the printers of the Low Countries not only subverted the constraints of a relatively small population, but also made light of the restrictions imposed by successive rulers, and the disruption of the Dutch Revolt.

VI

This sustained success is a warning against excessive determinism in interpreting the development of print culture in different parts of Europe. There was always room for the enterprising entrepreneur, such as the Lübeck merchant who supplied Breviaries and Missals to Livonia.[87] A notably successful printing tradition was sustained for much of the century in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) in East Prussia.[88] The planting of print in the Spanish American colonies was another successful example of a carefully planned venture that overcame daunting logistical difficulties.[89] But if we consider the central core of the European book world, the long-term success of print culture in sixteenth-century Europe depended ultimately on a paradoxical relationship between concentration of production and diversity of output. The wide dispersal of production that followed the first enthusiastic engagement with print in the fifteenth century represented a critical misunderstanding of the new dynamics of the book industry. This was a model of production appropriate for the manuscript age that could not work for print. Once this was recognised, after a painful period of adjustment, the restructured industry could achieve a wonderful diversity of production, in terms of both type and price. By the end of the sixteenth century Europe's printing industry could meet the needs of a large and ever expanding reading community,

[87] Hellmuth Helwig, 'Das Buchbinderhandwerk in Riga vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 8 (1967), cols. 485–904.

[88] *VD 16* lists 537 works printed in Königsberg during the sixteenth century.

[89] Joaquín García Icazbalceta, *Bibliografía mexicano del signo XVI* (Mexico City, 1954), lists 179 items fully described; a further 85 not known from surviving copies; 48 from fragments. Carlos E. Castañeda, 'The Beginning of Printing in America', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 20 (1940), 671–85; Lawrence S. Thompson, 'Some Reconsiderations of the Origin of Printing in Sixteenth-Century Mexico', in his *Essays in Hispanic Bibliography* (1970).

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for books on an ever increasing range of subjects, and in a huge variety of prices and formats.

Appendix

Estimate of total numbers of known books published in different parts of Europe before 1601, divided by country or region (March 2008)

'Core' zone	Vernacular	Latin	Total
France	45,344	34,000	79,344
Italy	50,800	47,000	97,800
Germany	62,600	70,016	132,616
Swiss Confederation	4,757	9,270	14,027
Low Countries	14,161	13,452	27,613
Total	177,662	173,738	351,400
Proportion of European total	86.1%	93.3%	89.5%
'Peripheral' regions			
England	11,616	1,816	13,432
Spain	10,200	4,800	15,000
Scandinavia	873	793	1,666
Eastern Europe	6,000	5,000	11,000
Total	28,689	12,409	41,098
Proportion of European total	13.9%	6.7%	10.5%
Total for whole of Europe	206,351	186,147	392,498

For **France**, vernacular editions are fully documented in *FB*. The figure for Latin editions is an estimate based on ongoing work for the third and fourth volumes of *FB: Books Published in France in Latin and Languages other than French*.

For **Italy**, the totals given here are based on a survey of the on-line edition of *Edit 16*. This is an ongoing survey; the 63,000 records analysed have been scaled up to account for holdings in libraries not yet surveyed (not least the British Library, the largest single collection of early Italian books). The I-STC database contributes a further 9,803 editions published in Italy.

For **Germany**, the *VD 16* reports 100,432 entries [August 2007], against an anticipated final total of around 128,000, and the I-STC a further 9,861 editions for Germany and German-speaking Europe. Entries for Basel, Zurich and Bern have been transferred to the Swiss Confederation, below. The *VD 16* also does not include single-sheet items or printed music, and

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a further adjustment has been made to include data from these separate surveys.

For the **Swiss Confederation** sixteenth-century imprints from French centres of production (Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel) are fully documented in *FB* and by Jean-François Gilmont in his GLN database. These generate records for 2,047 editions in the vernacular and 2,624 in the learned languages. The sixteenth-century editions from German-speaking parts of the Confederation are included in the *VD 16*; a search for Basel, Zurich, Bern and other marginal centres of production generates 8,400 records. The I-STC records 956 editions, divided between Geneva and Basel.

For the **Low Countries**, the figures are derived from the ongoing project to replace the existing Netherlandish and Belgian bibliographies: *NB. Books Published in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries and in Dutch Abroad* (forthcoming, Brill, 2009).

For **England**, a search has been made of the electronic E-STC, searching for place and language. An additional filter (country = England) ensures that false imprints are excluded.

For **Spain**, the figures are derived from the ongoing project, *IB. Books Published in Spain and Portugal before 1601 and in Spanish and Portuguese Abroad*, ed. Alexander Wilkinson (forthcoming, Brill, 2009).

For **Scandinavia** the figures are derived from existing national bibliographies.

For **Eastern Europe** use has been made of existing national bibliographies, refined for the ongoing project *ENB. Books Published before 1601 in Northern and Eastern Europe* (forthcoming, Brill, 2009).

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