ing Room Exhibit,” and “Cadet Corps Visit to Special Collections” are similarly puzzling images.\(^{13}\)

With a $95 cover price, many readers may question whether they’ve gotten good value; critical readers will probably feel ripped off. — Sidney F. Huttner, Emeritus Special Collections & University Archives Librarian, The University of Iowa.


Twenty years ago Jeffrey Freedman had the opportunity to spend eighteen months in the archives of the 18th-century Swiss publishing house, Société Typographique de Neuchâtel (STN), housed at the Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire in Switzerland. That research is the foundation of his newest book. Its premise is that book history has traditionally stayed within national or regional borders, but books don’t; they go where they are wanted. The narrative Freedman weaves of the STN’s efforts to sell French language books in Germany shows this quite well; and, though it does help to have some knowledge of 18th-century European history, the story is compelling and an enjoyable reading experience.

The University of Leeds recently published a free online database, *The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe, 1769–1794: Mapping the Trade of the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel* (http://chop.leeds.ac.uk/stn/), which is an excellent resource to explore and analyze the raw data of purchases and sales distribution for the STN. Freedman goes far beyond these data and brings the house alive by heavily quoting from the firm’s correspondence as it tried to build its business in Germany.

Freedman’s work consists of an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, five appendices, notes, bibliography, and an index. The first four chapters lay out details of the STN’s business and their early attempts at understanding and penetrating the existing German book trade. Freedman goes into some detail on the importance of book fairs to the German trade, specifically the annual Leipzig Easter fairs. I personally found this fascinating reading because the advice and admonishments that are found in the STN correspondence from experienced German booksellers is really quite informative on the realities of 18th-century

\(^{13}\) Something, though it is uncertain to this reviewer just what, may be explained in that Mr. Purcell holds an MLS from Maryland (College Park) and PhD (History) from the University of Tennessee and is currently head of Special Collections at Virginia Tech. Marc Brodsky, credited for all of the Figures not provided by the author himself, is Public Services and Reference Archivist there. The other members of the staff have titles of University Archivist, Processing and Acquisitions Archivist, Project Archivist, Digital Collections Archivist, and two Archives Assistants. The department is said to manage 1,600 manuscript collections, 60,000 books, and an institutional archive of unstated size. See http://spec.lib.vt.edu/.
commerce. The need to ship the books to Leipzig several months ahead of the fair because of the reliance on horse-drawn cartage, and the realization that the world once moved at the speed of a walking horse over bad roads, is illuminating to the modern reader.

Other topics that are covered in the first four chapters include the problem the STN had in finding booksellers who were willing to take their titles for sale. The reality of active but uneven censorship from the myriad of governments of the individual German states—all with different laws and customs—created an environment where a title could be banned in one state and welcomed by its neighbor. This was very unlike the situation in France, where a strong central authority never hesitated in throwing books on the bonfire.

Along with these issues, Freedman discusses the problem of balancing supply and demand for a distant audience when the lag time between press and market could be a year or more, as well as the differing tastes of the German audience. In chapter 3, Freedman changes gear and focuses on a particular French bookseller who lived and operated in Germany, Louis-François Mettra, a cosmopolitan character whom he uses to illustrate the eclectic nature of the book trade and its practitioners.

The remaining three chapters go into considerable detail on STN’s trade decisions in the context of the political realities of the time. Chapter 5 deals with the success of selling the *Encyclopédie* and the difficulty in selling French-language Bibles to the Germans. It seems that, though French had supplanted Latin as a veritable *lingua franca* in most ways, the Germans preferred their religion in German. Chapter 6 describes the difficulties that STN had in selling German-language books in France and French-speaking areas, the reality being that more Germans had a command of French than vice versa. Chapter 7 is a minibiography on another interesting bookseller, Jean-Guillaume Virchaux, who was a Hamburg resident and STN’s most important partner in Germany. Like Mettra, Virchaux lived a varied and adventurous life that illustrates well the ease that a French-speaker had in moving around 18th-century Europe.

Freedman concludes with a discussion of the importance of French books in a Europe of revolution and its aftermath. His conclusion? French books, though found in all corners of Europe, did not:

“...roll across Germany like Juggernauts flattening the cultural terrain beneath their wheels. Indeed, the circulation of French books in Germany may very well have done more to accentuate than to level the differences between the various groups within the German public:
those who read French books in translation and those who read them in the original language...”

Finally, the five appendices give a good deal of statistical information gleaned from the STN archives and are really only interesting to the most hardcore book lover or historian. I highly recommend this title to anyone with an interest in the history of the book. It is an important work for its ability to show the cosmopolitan nature of the 18th-century book trade and, possibly more important, it is a good read.—Rand Boyd, MLIS, CA, Special Collections and Archives Librarian, Chapman University.


The fifth volume in Konstantinos Staikos’ The History of the Library in Western Civilization is essentially a discussion of the beginnings and spread of humanism during the European Renaissance. In this context, a library is not a building designed to house books; it is instead the printed word in and of itself. It is therefore logical that much of the content in From Petrarch to Michelangelo is concerned with how the dissemination of literature complemented and influenced Renaissance thought. To this end, Staikos discusses topics such as the rediscovery of Greek and Roman texts and the impetus to publish new translations, the movement of Byzantine scholars to Western Europe, the influence of different publications and translations of the Bible, and the collections of prominent individuals such as Montaigne and Thomas Bodley.

The amount of material the author sets out to cover is impressive. The book is divided into eight chapters, which are further divided into subsections—for example, the focus of chapter 5 is Erasmus, but it also includes information about the shift of print culture from Paris to Geneva, the rise of book fairs, and what constitutes a Reformation library. This structure works better in some chapters than in others. The eighth and final chapter, which discusses the physical architecture of early modern libraries, is effectively laid out, with separate sections discussing iconography, furnishings, and the unique features of several prominent institutions including the library of the Holy See and the Bodleian. The Erasmus chapter, however, suffers from a lack of coherence. The connections between the different themes are not as apparent as in chapter 8; as a result, the narrative becomes muddled. The book might have benefited from more chapters with each having a narrower focus, such as having one dedicated entirely to the typography and the mechanics of printing, another one dedicated to the influence of religious change on printing and literature, and so forth. That having been said, Staikos should be commended for trying to provide as comprehensive