image’s meaning along with three possible modes of reading that meaning. Theodore Barrow explores the reuse of woodcuts and argues that the placement and combination of images on a given sheet, in conversation with each other and the text, was the key to their interpretation. Franklin’s reflective, narrative, and allusive modes and Barrow’s combinatorial approach are helpful in providing context for the potential ways in which scholars might analyze these images. The remaining essays turn to specific subject matter represented in print ephemera, namely, Tara Burk’s analysis of execution ephemera and Sally O’Driscoll’s inquiry into effeminacy as seen in caricatures of the foppish figure known as the macaroni. Again, these essays provide a broad overview of possible ways of engaging with print ephemera and the possibilities inherent in an interdisciplinary approach.

Overall, this compilation of essays is a useful introduction to the study of English print ephemera in the long eighteenth century. The essays explore past and present modes of analyzing ephemera, as well as their associated assumptions, and encourage new methodologies and further inquiry into the form. Librarians and archivists will find that there is room in these discussions for our perspectives and expertise. The essays may encourage us to dig deeper into our ephemera collections. They also may persuade us to talk with scholars of print ephemera about the classification schemes and metadata standards libraries use, or have used, and to ask how well they serve the scholars of today and the shifting approaches to their work.—Shannon K. Supple, Reader Services Librarian, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, Los Angeles.


Based on the Lyell Lectures in Bibliography that Professor Ian Maclean delivered at Oxford in 2009 and 2010, Maclean’s book has expanded these lectures to produce an interesting, detail-rich history of the late Renaissance book market for scholarly works.

Though Maclean concentrates on the European learned book market, he also does a fine job of evoking the realities of the general European book trade during 100 years he covers; consequently, someone without a strong knowledge of the history of the book will find this work informative. Maclean includes chapters covering all aspects of the trade: labor, the evolution of some printers into publishers, censorship, market forces, authors, as well as covering the high point and decline of the market. His postscript makes comparisons to the modern book trade, which was predictable given the dialog over the past ten years concerning the state of scholarly publishing.
As befits a work that grew from a series of lectures, this book is written in a conversational style that makes for easy reading, though at times Maclean does revert to a traditional, dense academic style that causes the reader to slow down. One nice feature is the naming of sections within chapters; for example: “Choosing Copy: Staples and Marginals” and “Reprinting and Reissuing” found in chapter 4. These section headings neatly break down the relatively long chapters and allow the reader to easily skim and then dip into the book wherever their fancy takes them.

One of the highlights of the book is Maclean’s portrait of Melchor Goldast von Haiminsfeld, the main subject of the second chapter. Goldast was a Calvinist Swiss scholar of shaky ethics who operated as a literary agent in Frankfurt am Main during the height of Latin book production in Germany from 1606 to 1615. Maclean convincingly uses Goldast’s variable fortunes and his circle of friends and colleagues in Frankfurt to illustrate the world of the book trade as its practitioners attempted to navigate the complex religious divisions at the time, as well as the interests of the state, all the while trying to make a profit.

“If God would give me a publisher!” Maclean employs this quote from 16th-century Greek scholar Martin Crusius to neatly sum up the plight of authors during this period. He argues that it was even more of a challenge in the 16th century for a scholar to secure publication of his work than a modern scholar. One of the more interesting aspects he discusses is self-publication. Today, academics tend to view self-publication with disdain. Then, however, if one could afford it, self-publication was a viable course to follow. Of course, patronage was the ultimate goal of most scholarly authors. Publishers sometimes took on this role, and Maclean’s chapters dealing with publishers comprise the heart of the book. He goes into great detail covering the development of publisher from mere printer, to printer-publisher, to something that would be recognized today as a publisher.

Maclean’s work is a vivid and readable account of the late 16th-century scholarly book trade. Covering the economic realities and intellectual constraints imposed by religious conflict in a broad sweep, Maclean still manages to make the story human through the use of examples drawn from historical persons.—Rand Boyd, MLIS, CA, Special Collections and Archives Librarian, Chapman University.