Review of Ian Maclean, "Learning and the Market Place. Essays in the History of the Early Modern Book"

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This splendid collection comprises fourteen articles by Ian Maclean, a leading expert in the intellectual history and learned culture of early modern Europe who has also been at the forefront of developments in book history since the formalization of this sub-discipline in the 1980s. Three of the articles are new, two have appeared since 2009, and the other nine first appeared between 1988 and 2008, mostly in edited volumes. Maclean notes that in reprinting them he has made some corrections of detail and modified some of the hypotheses advanced (6), but readers are unlikely to notice the changes. This collection brings together classic and new research that represents the best of our knowledge about the market for learned books, principally on the continent between 1530 and 1660, with a special focus on the publishing boom of 1580-1630 and the subsequent collapse of the German printing centers (for valuable summaries of the general conditions of the book trade, see 10-15, 109-11, 132-34, 244-45).

Maclean integrates questions about publishing and marketing decisions --how did printers choose what to print or reprint, for what target audiences, with what legal protections, and how did printers trade with one another and sell off their stock-- with an expert understanding of the authors, texts and intellectual contexts involved. In this way book historical analyses are used to answer questions in intellectual history: about specific authors (how did Cardano become famous, how and why were Melanchthon or Zabarella read differently in different places), and more general trends (e.g. what were
the dominant genres in early modern medicine or philosophy, what role did confessional commitments play in patterns of publication, trade and reading).

Maclean's work is all the more admirable that it offers a model for book historical analysis that most scholars can follow. Maclean does not typically rely on hitherto unknown caches of archival documents, but rather on piecing together evidence from a variety of printed sources. He attends to printing histories (which have become easier to draw up given the development of on-line library catalogs since many of Maclean's articles were first published), early modern catalogs (e.g. of the Frankfurt book fairs) and bibliographies (such as Georg Draut's Bibliotheca classica and Bibliotheca exotica, 1625) to assess contemporary expectations about discipline, genre, and marketability. He reads attentively the secondary literature in many languages, including classic studies which are well known but have hardly been exhausted (such as Heinrich Pallmann, Sigmund Feyerabend, 1881; Leon Voet, The Golden Compasses, 1969-72; or Henri Louis Baudrier, Bibliographie lyonnaise, 1895, 1964). In turn Maclean contributes valuable book historical data in the appendices that accompany most of the articles in this volume (including lists of editions or copies found, or the relevant sections of early modern bibliographies, or the inventory of Lyonnais bookseller Etienne Michael, 251ff.). Above all, Maclean combs the text, front matter, and material bibliography of the early modern printed books that he analyzes, mostly in philosophy and medicine.

Maclean thus argues from a nuanced and empirically grounded understanding of both the intellectual disputes and motivations of individual authors and their works, and of the early modern book trade. Maclean emphasizes that, like other kinds of books, learned books were generally published in the hope of making a profit (though he
cautions that some commemorative genres, like *Opera omnia*, were prone to reissues masquerading as new editions, 125). Maclean's refusal to repeat standard generalizations led him to notice early on trends which are now receiving careful attention, such as the fact that Spain was not as cut off from the rest of the European book market as was once thought (pp. 77, 249).

As a historian of learned culture Maclean is of course interested in universities, though in this volume he sees the book market as developing an alternative to the map of knowledge adopted by most universities (147). Maclean also notes that printing and universities were not necessarily closely connected, since the new technology had to compete with the scriptoria active there (89ff). With his focus on the intellectual categories and economic realities that constrained the production and circulation of learned printed books Ian Maclean explains the broader context in which professors and their students inevitably operated. Given the market constraints of our own time, this book itself will no doubt be disseminated mostly through university libraries, but the motto of the Basel printer Johann Froben cited on p. 74 also applies today: someone "who buys a good book at a high price gets a bargain, whereas someone who buys a bad book cheaply get a loss."

Contents:

Articles previously published: The Market for Scholarly Books and Conceptions of Genre in Northern Europe, 1570-1630; The Readership of Philosophical Fictions in France in the Sixteenth Century: the Bibliographical Evidence; Mediations of Zabarella in Northern Germany, 1586-1623; The Diffusion of Learned Medicine in the Sixteenth Century through the Printed Book; Melanchthon at the Book Fairs, 1560-1601: Editors,
Markets and Religious Strife; Cardano and his Publishers, 1534-1663; André Wechel at Frankfurt, 1572-1581; Murder, Debt and Retribution in the Italico-Franco-Spanish Book Trade: the Beraud-Michel-Ruiz Affair, 1586-1591; Competitors or Collaborators?
Sebastian Gryphius and his Colleagues in Lyon, 1528-1556.
Published since 2009: The Reception of Medieval Practical Medicine in the Sixteenth Century: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova; English Books on the Continent, 1570-1630.
Otherwise unpublished: Alberico Gentili, his Publishers, and the Vagaries of the Book Trade between England and Germany, 1580-1614; 'Lusitani periti': Portuguese Medical Authors, National Identity and Bibliography in the Late Renaissance; Louis Jacob de Saint-Charles (1608-1670) and the Development of Specialist Bibliography.