

## REVIEWS

Hugh Reid, *The Nature and Uses of Eighteenth-Century Book Subscription Lists*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2010. 84 pp. ISBN: 978 0 7734 3757 9. US\$99.95, £64.95.

*Reviewed by Patrick Spedding*

This insubstantial and expensive volume offers a very basic and incomplete overview of its subject. Reid summarises the contents of a score of articles on book subscription lists in a total of approximately fifteen thousand words, divided into five chapters: “The Eighteenth Century Book Trade,” “The Role and Nature of Subscription Lists,” “Getting Subscriptions and the Reputation of the Practice,” “Previous Studies” and “Further Approaches to the Study of Subscription Lists and Caveats.”

Reid’s summary of the scholarship is brief (John A. Vance, in his foreword, twice refers to the book as “concise”), incomplete and dated. Most of the works cited are from the 1970s and 1980s—only two articles were published this century. Although a small number of Internet resources are included in the list of “sources for researching subscription lists” (53–56) these are limited to resources that might contain biographical information on subscribers.

Reid does not mention the 1972 Newcastle Subscription Lists Project which culminated in F. J. G. Robinson and P. J. Wallis, *Book Subscription Lists: A Revised Guide* (1975) and Robin Alston, F. J. G. Robinson and P. J. Wallis eds., *Checklist of Eighteenth-Century Books Containing Lists of Subscribers* (1983)—although the *Extended Supplement to the Revised Guide*, edited by Ruth Wallis (1996) is mentioned, as is Wallis’s “Book Subscription Lists” (1974). Likewise, although Reid cites John Brewer’s *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1997), he does not mention the publication which Brewer describes as having “transformed” (676–77) the field: *The Biography Database, 1680–1830* [CD-ROM] (1995, 1998), which includes more than a thousand subscription lists from this period.

It seems unlikely that Reid omits important articles—such as Robinson and Wallis’s “The Potential Uses of Book Subscription Lists” (1973)—because he considers them to be superseded by later work from the same author(s). Rather, he seems to have a patchy and superficial knowledge of the scholarship. Reid is most reliable where he is summarising the work of scholars such as Terry Bellanger, Thomas Lockwood and Pat Rogers, or when he is offering details of a particular work, such as William Pattison’s *Poetical Works* (1728; which is discussed at length on 28–33).

It is difficult to imagine a reader for whom this work would be useful. While it is rarely misleading (it seems unlikely, for example, that London subscription publishers had nothing to fear from Irish pirates, as Reid suggests (12), but this

is both debatable and an isolated example) it is so insubstantial as to be of no use except as an introduction, yet his representation of the scholarship is so incomplete as to be of little use as an introduction to the field.

It is, moreover, very poorly edited. In fact, it appears not to have been edited by the press at all. There are a handful of errors (“from publisher” for “from the publisher” (23), “Stick-Jobbers” for “Stock-Jobbers” (37), “quarto sixe” for “quarto size” (40), “1 Dublin” for “Dublin” (42) etc) and infelicities (“women ... or other sub groups” on 49; “Another other case” on 52), as well as numerous inconsistencies that will irritate anyone with any editorial experience: double-hyphens are used for em-rules on the same page that em-rules are correctly used (ii); en-rules are not used at all, anywhere; paragraphs are usually—but not consistently—spaced (not spaced on 12, 13, 43, 46); lengthy quotations are block-set only once (on 1; but not on 4–5, etc.); book titles are usually given in italic, but are occasionally underlined instead (44), quotation marks are reversed (29, 31, 43. etc.), used inconsistently (single and double quotation marks, 42) and mis-paired (opening with a single and closing with a double, on 43); abbreviations are used in text (42); and words are never used for numbers, even single-digit numbers.

Although the casual reader is unlikely to be confused by these inconsistencies, the sloppy presentation does give this slim volume the appearance of an undergraduate essay. Scholars will be left with a similar impression.

Susan Dackerman, ed., *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011. 442 pp. 297 colour illus. ISBN: 978 0 300 17107 5. US\$60.

Suzanne Karr Schmidt, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011. 112 pp. 98 colour illus. ISBN: 978 0 300 16911 9. US\$35.

*Reviewed by Andrea Bubenik*

Most early modern prints are not displayed with great frequency in today’s museums: small in scale, sensitive to the elements, and seemingly esoteric to the untrained eye, they are more often than not hidden from the view of visitors, who tend to be more eager to see large scale works of painting and sculpture. When prints are displayed, it is often to highlight their aesthetic qualities, or perhaps as part of the oeuvre of a major printmaker such as Dürer or Rembrandt. The irony in all of this is that during the early modern period prints were amongst the most used (and abused) of all art objects. The reproducibility of prints and their existence as works on paper made them available in great numbers to a diverse cross section of the population. Simply put, they were far more accessible and affordable than