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Thierry Rigogne, *Between State and Market: Printing and Bookselling in Eighteenth-Century France*. Foreword by Robert Darnton. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2007 (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century). xiii + 313 pp. Maps, illustrations, tables, bibliography, and index. \$132.00 U.S. (pb); ISBN 978-0729409070.

Review by Jeremy D. Popkin, University of Kentucky.

The contrast between Robert Darnton's claim, in the preface to Thierry Rigogne's new monograph, that "scholars of the eighteenth century have only a shadowy idea of the infrastructure of the Enlightenment," (p. xv) and the actual content of Rigogne's study, in which "Enlightenment" does not even rate an index entry, gives an interesting clue to the new directions in which the history of the book in eighteenth century France is moving.[1] Although Rigogne began this project as a dissertation under Darnton's direction, it actually moves away from the "social history of ideas" that has framed Darnton's own research and concentrates instead on understanding the political and administrative framework within which eighteenth-century printers and booksellers functioned. The story Rigogne tells is indeed one of movement in the direction of modernity, but it is a modernity defined, not by the diffusion of particular ideas and texts, but by the development of a provincial printing industry and book trade better suited to exploit market opportunities and promote new kinds of reading. Furthermore, in place of Darnton's familiar portrayal of a book trade systematically at war with a repressive French government, Rigogne gives a picture of printers and booksellers who were as often in collusion with the authorities as they were in opposition to them. The result is both an important contribution to the history of print culture and a fascinating case study of the relationship between government and society in the last decades of the old regime.

*Between State and Market* is built around an intensive study of a single set of documents: the responses to a survey of the French book trades ordered by the *Directeur de la librairie* Sartine upon his appointment to that office in 1764. As Rigogne explains, Sartine's survey was only one of a number of such efforts in the course of the eighteenth century, and he makes good use of the surviving data from the abbé Bignon's earlier inquest in 1700, as well as the printed book-trade almanacs that began to appear after 1770, to put the 1764 results in perspective. The 1764 survey is by far the most comprehensive, however, and the only one for which the raw data have been preserved. Standardized forms directed the *intendants* to report on policing of the book trades in their territories and to provide detailed information about local printers and booksellers, including an estimation of the nature of their production and a report on whom they did business with.

Although the French system for controlling the circulation of printed texts was supposedly a model of bureaucratic completeness and efficiency, the replies to Sartine's survey showed that the reality was entirely different. Regulations originally drawn up in 1723 for the policing of Paris had been extended to the entire kingdom in 1744 without any concern for provincial conditions. Only a few towns outside of Paris had the fully developed book-trade guild structure and the full-time officials presumed by the regulations. In some places, local printers and booksellers were left to police themselves; elsewhere, officials overburdened with other concerns rarely bothered to enforce the rules. Authorities were often more concerned to protect the business interests of the printers and booksellers in their town, who served local institutions and elites, than they were to enforce the cumbersome rules handed down from Paris. The result was a system that lacked the capacity to prevent the production and circulation of

forbidden books—a category that included both genuinely subversive materials and the more numerous *contrefaçons* of authorized titles—but, in Rigogne’s view, the administrators themselves accepted this situation. They were satisfied if they made the import and sale of truly forbidden books somewhat costlier and more complicated than it would have been otherwise; as far as counterfeiting was concerned, many provincial officials tolerated it as the only way for local printers to make a living in the face of regulations that heavily favored the privileged printers of Paris.

The royal administration was not entirely ineffective. From the end of the eighteenth century, it had pursued a plan to reduce the number of printers by squeezing out the least successful enterprises, which were assumed to be the most likely to break the rules, and to concentrate production in a smaller number of centers, thereby making supervision easier. This policy had begun under Colbert in the late seventeenth century, but inconsistent enforcement meant that the results were not really seen until Sartine’s period. The outcome was not a printing trade stifled by authoritarian control, but rather a leaner, meaner group of more efficient entrepreneurs who “had benefited handsomely from the concentration of the industry” (p. 145). Government intervention had promoted a process of rationalization that guild regulations and entrepreneurial conservatism would otherwise have hindered. Nevertheless, Rigogne finds, the most innovative sector of the book trades was not the printers but the booksellers, who were less carefully regulated. Whereas printers could be defined as the operators of presses, book vendors were a more varied lot and included not only the owners of shops dedicated to that purpose but unspecialized merchants who sold books alongside other goods, colporteurs, and priests and schoolteachers who might also distribute reading material. Where they existed, book-trade guilds tried to limit competition, but from 1767 on the *Direction de la librairie* actually encouraged it by selling new licenses or *brevets* as a means of raising funds. The result was a growth in the number of vendors and in the number of communities with a bookstore, which rose from 167 in 1764 to 212 in 1781.

The market for books in the French provinces was in many ways still oriented toward tradition. Local religious, legal and educational institutions were often the biggest customers, providing a steady demand for prayer books, legal documents and school texts. Nevertheless, Rigogne sees evidence that innovative booksellers were learning to stimulate and exploit an interest in new kinds of texts, books of literature and history whose consumers “formed a public, a community based on common interests rather than on occupations” (p. 196). Some of the books to feed this new demand were smuggled in from presses abroad, such as the Société typographique de Neuchâtel familiar to readers of Darnton’s works, but many of them were actually counterfeited in France itself. Like Jean-Dominique Mellot, Rigogne insists on the importance of centers such as Lyon, Rouen, Toulouse and Limoges, whose printers supplied extensive regional markets.<sup>[2]</sup> Rather than Darnton’s sharp contrast between domestic and foreign printing trades, Mellot and Rigogne thus sketch a three-way division of labor between Paris, the provinces, and the extraterritorial enterprises. Although much of what the provincial presses put out was technically illegal, local administrators often tolerated it because they saw counterfeiting as the only resource to keep the enterprises under their supervision economically viable.

Rigogne thus makes a persuasive case for his conclusion that book-trade regulation was “much less dogmatic in its policies and much less powerful in its ability to enforce them than often portrayed” (p. 221). Despite legal restrictions—and, indeed, sometimes because of them—the French book trades were becoming more dynamic and market-oriented, a reflection of the wealthier, more urbanized and more commercialized society of which they were an integral part. Rigogne’s findings parallel Gilles Feyel’s exhaustive study of the development of the French provincial press, which also owed much to administrative encouragement.<sup>[3]</sup> The process of book-trade expansion accelerated dramatically in the quarter-century after 1789, but the direction in which things were going was already clear before the Revolution.<sup>[4]</sup> *Between State and Market* provides a clear and convincing picture of the development of the book trades in provincial France in the last decades of the old regime, and it also helps us understand how government and society affected each other during this period. In view of the broad

potential appeal of Rigogne's clearly written study, one does have to regret that it has appeared with a publishing house that is definitely not oriented toward that market of general readers whose emergence is traced in its pages. At \$132 for a paperback copy, the book is too expensive for classroom use. The fact that the often lengthy source citations are given only in French reflects, alas, a bygone era, and severely limits the book's accessibility for undergraduates. This is regrettable, because Rigogne has shed important new light on many questions that readers of his mentor's popular works would want to pursue.

## NOTES

[1] Darnton's comment reflects a curiously narrow definition of the Enlightenment's "infrastructure." The general subject has been extensively explored in studies such as Daniel Roche, *Le Siècle des Lumières en Province: académies et académiciens provinciaux, 1680-1789*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1978), Jean Quéniart, *Culture et sociétés urbaines dans la France de l'Ouest au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: 1978), Jack R. Censer, *The French Press in the Age of Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 1994), and Antoine Lilti, *Le Monde des Salons: sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), to name only a few titles from a vast literature.

[2] A short overview of Mellot's work can be found in his article, "Counterfeit Printing as an Agent of Diffusion and Change: The French Book-Privilege System and Its Contradictions (1498-1790)," in Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin, eds., *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 42-66.

[3] Gilles Feyel, *L'Annonce et la nouvelle: la presse d'information en France sous l'Ancien Régime, 1630-1788* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000).

[4] Jeremy D. Popkin, "The Book Trades in Western Europe during the Revolutionary Era," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 78 (1984): 403-45.

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