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Review of Annika Haß, *Europäischer Buchmarkt und Gelehrtenrepublik:
Die transnationale Verlagsbuchhandlung Treuttel & Würtz, 1750–1850*

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ANNIKA HASS, *Europäischer Buchmarkt und Gelehrtenrepublik: Die transnationale Verlagsbuchhandlung Treuttel & Würtz, 1750–1850*, *Pariser Historische Studien*, 127 (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 2023), 516 pp. ISBN 978 3 968 22074 1 (hardback, €65.00); ISBN 978 3 968 22073 4 (open access e-book)

The publishing house of Treuttel & Würtz, its predecessors, and (to a lesser extent) its successors between 1750 and 1850 are the subject of this study by Annika Haß. The book is based on her doctoral dissertation, which she completed in Paris and Saarbrücken. The firm became a major player in the developing international book trade, spreading from its original home in Strasbourg to set up branches in Paris and London, and its customers, authors, translators, and partners ranged wider still. The author's initial hypothesis is that Treuttel & Würtz represent a 'crystallization of, and catalyst in, the exchange of ideas between Germany and France in the epochal shift around 1800', both through their professional and personal networks of contacts and through the material provision of books (p. 25), and she demonstrates this in a thorough examination of the firm's history, practices, and publishing programme.

As Haß points out in her introduction, a considerable challenge in this undertaking was the lack of a company archive for Treuttel & Würtz. This meant searching for diverse material in a wide variety of archives, libraries, and museums, as well as consulting contemporary published sources. The breadth is impressive – the list of published and unpublished primary sources runs to twenty-three pages, and the bibliography of secondary literature takes up a further fifteen – and some of the sources are unexpected: even surviving family portraits are scrutinized for what they might tell us about how the families' and firm's self-image fed into their business practices. Haß concludes that the lack of an archive was in one sense an advantage, preventing her from simply falling back on an official record of Treuttel & Würtz, and bringing in more sources that looked at the firm from the perspective of those who had dealings with it. Certainly, it has not prevented the creation of a detailed and comprehensive account, although occasionally it means that Haß has had to extrapolate broad principles from a small amount of archive material.

The firm originated in the bookshop and lending library founded by Jean Geoffroy Bauer in Strasbourg in 1749. Bauer married the daughter of Strasbourg University's printer and began publishing as well as selling books. Jean-George Treuttel became a partner in the firm in 1772 and further developed the publishing business with an eye to a more international market. Following Bauer's death, he took over the business, and at around the same time Jean Godefroi Würtz joined it as a trainee. In 1796, the two men opened their Paris branch and formally established the firm of Treuttel & Würtz with Paris as its main headquarters. A London branch followed in 1817 but was never a great commercial success and was abandoned in 1833. When Treuttel retired in 1823, Würtz continued the business alone but retained the name Treuttel & Würtz. After Würtz's death, the firm carried on under different owners and names until 1875 in Paris and 1934 in Strasbourg.

The London branch, to which Haß devotes a subsection of the first chapter (pp. 95–105), is of particular interest in an Anglo-German context. The appeal of London for an internationally oriented firm was obvious; if Paris was the centre of the European book trade, London offered a better gateway to the New World and to British colonial possessions. Even under Napoleon's Continental System, Treuttel & Würtz had sought and gained permission to export to Britain, demonstrating their ambitions for this market. A London branch was the next logical step, although it meant entering a field where there was already competition from established 'foreign booksellers'. From the start, this was conceived primarily as a bookselling rather than a publishing venture; Haß argues that John Sutherland's quoted figure of thirty-two titles published by Treuttel & Würtz in London from 1824 to 1827 includes ephemeral material and items probably in fact printed in Paris (p. 103). This became a source of contention with one of the partners in London, Adolphe Richter, who was keen to expand the publishing side of the London branch. Richter took over the business after Treuttel & Würtz dissolved it, but declared bankruptcy the following year. Nonetheless, despite its ongoing financial difficulties, Haß points out that the London branch managed to survive for a comparatively long time in a crowded and competitive market. A general crisis in London publishing in the late 1820s contributed to the failure of the business, as did the loss of its role as chief supplier of foreign books to the British Museum Library.

In describing the origins of the main French parts of the firm, Haß emphasizes the importance of its initial location in Strasbourg to its rise to become an international player. A combination of specific geographical, cultural, and economic features meant that the city was well placed as a centre of Franco-German and wider European cultural transfer, something that its book trade was able to exploit, with access to many markets and an effective combination of different French and German traditions and practices. Together with other Strasbourg publishers and booksellers, Bauer, Treuttel, and Würtz formed what Haß describes as an ‘aristocracy of the book trade’, whose members collaborated to their own advantage and jealously guarded their position against potential rivals. Links with the actual aristocracy and with influential political figures aided them in this, as they were able to lobby the authorities in their own interests. This was often done alongside claims to be working for a greater public good, such as cracking down on pirate editions or promoting public literacy through the provision of public libraries. At the same time, the former measure protected the established publishers’ commercial interests and the latter provided them with a ready market for their books.

This is an example of a balance between commerce and Enlightenment ideals—the ‘book market and republic of scholars’ of the subtitle—which is a recurring theme throughout the book. Bauer, Treuttel, Würtz, and their associates shared an interest in and commitment to the values of the Enlightenment and of their Protestant faith, and their publishing programme reflected this. They saw books not only as marketable commodities but as vessels for the transfer of ideas. By promoting specific authors and disciplines, they could help to shape intellectual discourse and to establish a literary canon. At the same time, they were skilled at turning things to their commercial advantage, as demonstrated by the case study of their complete edition of Germaine de Staël’s works, published in 1820–1 (pp. 359–73). De Staël’s views chimed closely with those of the firm, and the edition that they produced was a major scholarly project, remaining a standard into the twenty-first century, but de Staël’s fame and popularity were also a draw; the work made both ideological and commercial sense. Complicated contractual deals had to be made with those who had published de Staël in her lifetime (the documents are transcribed

in appendix C), and Würtz exploited legal loopholes to ensure that Treuttel & Würtz effectively gained sole rights to de Staël's works. At the same time as being good business for the firm, the acquisition of these rights reflected a growing recognition of the need for formal copyright regulations, again combining business advantage with a contribution towards a more common good.

A similar tension between Enlightenment ideals and canny business sense can be seen in the firm's customer base. They supplied ordinary scholars and university libraries around Europe, especially in France and Germany, but their main (and, it appears, most valued) clients tended to be in the higher echelons of society. They produced high-quality editions aimed at wealthy and aristocratic bibliophiles and were suppliers to various royal libraries in the German states. Haß details in particular Bauer's and Treuttel's dealings with the court in Weimar and the intellectual circles around it (pp. 191–212). In collaboration with the Weimar bookseller Friedrich Justin Bertuch, they supplied the court primarily with French books and occasionally with other goods: Haß mentions letters from Treuttel to Bertuch detailing orders of mirrors, gold epaulettes, and tickets for the Paris lottery, which were supplied to Grand Duke Carl August (p. 199). The move away from the eighteenth-century culture of enlightened scholar-princes and the shift from royal to national libraries is cited as one of the contributing factors in the firm's decline as the nineteenth century drew on.

However, Treuttel & Würtz did also pursue initiatives aimed purely at the less aristocratic. As devout Lutherans, they were committed to producing affordable Bibles and devotional works for a wide audience. In 1821 they acquired Louis-Étienne Herhan's stereotyping equipment and plates, which enabled the quick and economic production particularly of classical texts key to higher school and university study at the time. Both projects served the ideals of promoting piety and learning—and again, both were potentially lucrative. Direct involvement with the production of stereotyped texts did not last long, and by 1827 Treuttel & Würtz were contracting this work out to another firm. A collaboration with Alois Senefelder to set up a lithographic institute in Paris at around the same time was similarly short-lived, but both ventures into new processes indicate an interest on the part of Treuttel & Würtz in technological as well as intellectual progress.

Another of the firm's initiatives, which Haß examines in more detail, was the development of their catalogues and bibliographical journals. Bauer had, of course, issued catalogues from the start of his business, and these were of high quality, but Treuttel refined them further, creating what became a model for others. His major competitor in Salzburg, Frédéric-Rodolphe Salzmann, explicitly stated in a letter to Bertuch in Weimar that his catalogues were 'based on the Treuttel model' (p. 204). This approach to Bertuch was a cause for concern to Treuttel, who was moved to remind Bertuch of their long business association and friendship, and also used other means to stall Salzmann's attempts to take over the lucrative and prestigious trade with the Weimar court.

Like their catalogues, the bibliographical journals published by Treuttel & Würtz were influential among their contemporaries. In 1798, the firm founded the monthly *Journal général de la littérature de France*, comprising bibliographic details of new French publications, usually accompanied by a short review. It was joined in 1801 by the *Journal général de la littérature étrangère*, which covered the rest of Europe in the same way. The *Foreign Quarterly Review*, published with the firm's London imprint between 1827 and the London branch's closure, performed a similar function of bringing news of new Continental publications to a British audience. Haß positions these publications in the context of the development of bibliography and the organization of knowledge during the period, and places them among the forerunners of national bibliographies, the production of which began in the nineteenth century. But as she points out, unlike a purely descriptive national bibliography, these journals demonstrate certain biases in the choice of publications listed: they were skewed towards the output of publishers in Treuttel & Würtz's own geographical, social, and business circles, and towards the genres and subject areas that they favoured in their own programme.

In her detailed analysis of the publishing output of Treuttel & Würtz (ch. 3), Haß identifies four periods of activity, roughly correlating to the major European (and specifically French) political shifts of the period. She links both the firm's rise and its decline to the intellectual, cultural, and political currents of the age. In the eighteenth century, Treuttel & Würtz represented and promoted the values of the Enlightenment and of a transnational European culture. As the nineteenth century drew

on, they failed to keep up with post-Enlightenment cultural and intellectual trends and the changes wrought by the rise of nationalism. Where other firms continued to innovate, Treuttel & Würtz generally remained wedded to earlier values and practices. There were also more practical reasons for decline. Lawsuits brought against Treuttel & Würtz in the 1830s by one of their authors, Jean-Guillaume Locré, although won by the firm, damaged their reputation. More significantly, there was also an increasing number of competitors in the international book trade, many of whom copied and built on Treuttel & Würtz's earlier innovations, making the firm in some ways a victim of its own success. In addition, the death of Jean Godefroi Würtz in 1841 severed the last direct familial link with the original founders; the sons-in-law who took over the business had less of a personal investment in the firm and less talent for running it.

Haß has a slight tendency to repeat information, perhaps betraying the book's origin as a thesis, and her decision to quote at length from the English bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin in French translation struck this reviewer as an odd one. But these are minor issues in a work that is a valuable contribution not only to the history of one specific firm but also to the history of the book trade as a whole and to the intellectual history of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

SUSAN REED is Head of German Printed Collections at the British Library. Her research interests include printed ephemera from the 1848 revolutions in Berlin and Vienna, and the history of German-language publishing in nineteenth-century Britain. On the latter topic she has most recently published "'A modest sentinel for German interests in England': The Anglo-German Press in the Long Nineteenth Century", in Stéphanie Prévost and Bénédicte Deschamps (eds.), *Immigration and Exile Foreign-Language Press in the UK and in the US: Connected Histories of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London, 2024), 93–108. She has also curated major British Library exhibitions on the early twentieth-century European avant-garde, the Russian Revolution, and fantasy, as well as smaller displays on Schiller, Luther, and Stefan Zweig.