

## Material Cultures 2010

### Proposal

#### The importance of foreign export: the contrasting examples of Paris, Antwerp and Lyon at the sixteenth-century Frankfurt book fair, 1564-1600

By the sixteenth century the mediaeval fair at Frankfurt-am-Main had become the paramount book fair in Europe. Printers and publishers from throughout the continent sent their wares to the city for sale. The trade at the fair became an increasingly important source of revenue for many in the print trade, so much so that it caused Henri Estienne to write a paean to the fair and its importance in the recovery of his fortune. In 1564 the bookseller and publisher Georg Willers began printing a list of the editions for sale at Frankfurt. He usually noted where it was printed and by whom, and when.

The printing industry in Paris was formidable. In terms of edition numbers it is only matched by that of Venice and in terms of western and northern Europe, it significantly outprints its major competitors: Antwerp and Lyon. Yet an analysis of Willers data suggests that the print trade in these cities took greater advantage of the opportunities provided by Frankfurt than did that of Paris.

Through an examination of the contents of Willers' printed booklists it is possible to compare the stock that was available at the fairs from Paris, Antwerp and Lyon with the overall output of those cities: data that has been newly compiled as part of the work of the St Andrews Universal Short Title Catalogue project. It is the intention of this paper to show that the experiences of the printing trade of these cities in regard to the Frankfurt Book Fair were at a variance due more to geographical and trade connections than to size of industry.

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