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This work is the product of fifteen years of thought and research and came eleven years after the author first published a long periodical article outlining her subject. Its major thesis is that the move of the reproduction of written materials from the copyist's desk to the printer's workshop revolutionized all forms of learning, both special and popular. "Revolution" is a key word in this proposition. The author argues that the huge increase in the number of books and the improved accessibility to them brought about by the spread of printing in fifteenth-century Europe promoted changes in public knowledge that were more than evolutionary. Contrasting the state of learning before print and after print, she focuses on the printing press and its organization for the production and distribution of books as an effective agent for change.

Although the bibliography of the history of printing is lengthy indeed, few authors have attempted to synthesize the intellectual impact of the advent of printing technology. Marshall McLuhan addressed the question in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Pr., 1962), but, as Eisenstein charges, McLuhan "shirked the task of organizing his material coherently" (p. 41). In contrast she is mindful of chronology and logic and is critical of her sources.

Such a work of historical synthesis necessarily draws from previously published histories. Among printing historians, Eisenstein favors Rudolf Hirsch, Lucien Febvre and H.-J. Martin, and S. H. Steinberg for their useful syntheses of the book trade. Other printing historians are cited for special cases, and the author demonstrates good control of the facts of printing history that interest her. Printing as a graphic art is not in her scope of inquiry. While she is interested in comparing uses and popularity of gothic and roman type, she is not concerned with the refinements of type design; and she is interested in book illustration primarily as it contributes to substantive content. In keeping with her subject, intellectual histories and histories of scholarship predominate in the "Bibliographical Index" (p. 709-67), a valuable alphabetical-by-author list of references indexed for pages where they are cited.

Emphasizing the literate populace and specialized learning, the author argues that changes in the public image of the world wrought by the printing press began among scholars. Books in far greater numbers were
available to them than before. Ensuing editions set forth in chronological array the state of current knowledge and in so doing contributed to new. Formats were organized and texts were standardized. Scholars often transferred their critical and creative labors to the printers' workshop, mingling with artisans and entrepreneurs who caught a whiff of scholarship (or at least the scholarly market).

Classical scholarship, the scriptural tradition, and science receive detailed attention in this work, with an analysis of political movements promised for later publication. Some of the argument is taken up with the question of periodization, implicit in the thesis of revolutionary change. The analyses cannot be presented, much less criticized, in detail here, but an example from her treatment of the scriptural tradition will illustrate her approach. She argues that the scriptural tradition had already been recast in consequence of the printing of Latin, vernacular, and polyglot Bibles before the Reformation put massive editions of vernacular Bibles in the hands of the laity. As print spread the tradition to a popular audience, it sometimes acquired anti-intellectual overtones and the extraneous policies of religious and political jurisdictions affected the cultural unity and discord of Europe.

The book is well written and impressive, without being oppressive, in its erudition. The author is skillful at assembling relevant sources, and she argues with them, sometimes tartly, when their interpretations conflict with her own. In the same tenor, because this book covers so much ground, it is bound to attract its own critics in many specialized parts. Her argument that the printing press introduced revolutionary rather than evolutionary change is an example. She makes a very convincing case for it, but one function of a historian is to find instances that may conflict with a generalization. Little really has been published about the manuscript book trade to which the printing trade is compared. Paul Saenger's article on Colard Mansion's commercial scriptorium (cited by Eisenstein on p.37) is an example of the search for conflicting instances. Such questioning over a period of
time will enhance our understanding of the subject.

The Printing Press as an Agent of Change deserves to be studied by all who are concerned with the efficacy of print. It is a thoughtful and sophisticated approach to the kinds of effects that can be anticipated from communication and how they can be discerned. Laid in the social and intellectual structures that facilitated or resisted the progress of print, the text observes the unwinding of human knowledge in the course of years. This is consistent with the author’s choice of the printing press as an agent of change instead of the agent of change in her title. More recent developments in communication could benefit from similar study.

The development of the power press and other advanced mechanization contributed to the speed and volume of the production and dissemination of print in the nineteenth century that may have been proportionate to the increase of the hand press over manuscripts. The electronic revolution of our own time—the media, the computer, the vision of a paperless society—has resulted from technological advances far more radical than the recombination of traditional materials and processes involved in the invention of printing and the power press. It has resulted not only in the manifold magnification of the speed and volume with which communications are reproduced and disseminated but also in new ways for the generation of data. One should not look for too close a parallel in the effects of these later revolutions with the effects Eisenstein infers from the early progress of printing, but she has pointed a way in which effects might be studied without waiting several centuries.—Howard W. Winger, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.