Joris van Grieken, Ger Luijten, and Jan Van der Stock

Hieronymus Cock. The Renaissance in Print. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013, 32 cm, 416 pp., 320 illus., ISBN 9780300191844, $ 95,-).

Although early modern prints and printmakers from the Northern and Southern Netherlands have received much attention from art historians and from related disciplines, it was only in the past two decades that the role of print publishers has received more scholarly attention. Print publishers – as has been made apparent – were pivotal for the emergence and flourishing of print production and dissemination during this period.

Significant studies such as Nadine Orenstein’s Hendrick Hondius and the Business of Prints in Seventeenth-Century Holland (Rotterdam 1996) and Manfred Sellink’s Philips Galle (1537-1612): Engraver and Print Publisher in Haarlem and Antwerp (Amsterdam 1997) focussed on the oeuvre of a single print publisher. In Peter Fuhring’s Stocklists of European Print Publishers: Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century (Rotterdam 2001) and in the exhibition catalogue Gedrukt tot Amsterdam: Amsterdamse prentmakers en –uitgevers in de Gouden Eeuw (Amsterdam 2011) by Elmer Kolfin and Jaap van der Veen, the work of multiple print publishers has been taken under scrutiny.
The publication at issue, *Hieronymus Cock: the Renaissance in Print*, is also conceived as an exhibition catalogue, yet it analyzes the work of one particular print publisher. Even though the catalogue is devoted to a single print publisher, it proves that the work of Hieronymus Cock offers an extremely rich subject of study.

The compilers of the publication, print specialists Joris van Grieken, Ger Luijten and Jan van der Stock, rightly state that Hieronymus Cock (1517/18-70) was the most important sixteenth-century print publisher in the Southern as well as the Northern Netherlands. Nearly 2,000 prints were published by Cock’s publishing firm between 1548, when he opened his print publishing house *Aux quatre vents* or *In de Vier Winden* (At the Sign of the Four Winds) in Antwerp, and 1600, when his wife Volcxken Diericx, who carried on the publishing house after his death, died herself.

Cock's stock list demonstrates that he published prints of an enormous variety in subject matter that were designed by many different highly skilled artists, including Maerten van Heemskerck and Frans Floris. The prints often were engraved or etched by other artists, such as Philips Galle. Yet, despite his large and varied stock, Hieronymus Cock is not as well-known today as he should be. This is due perhaps to the fact that he has been somewhat overshadowed in literature by Christoffel Plantijn, whose *De Gulden Passer* (the Golden Compass) was the most important publishing house for books in Antwerp in the sixteenth century.

Cock’s large output has resulted in a bulky exhibition catalogue. While the predecessor of this catalogue, Ann Diels’ *The Shadow of Rubens: Print Publishing in 17th-century Antwerp* (London 2009) was already a sizeable publication of 271 pages, *Hieronymus Cock: the Renaissance in Print* surpasses it with over 400 pages. Of course this is not surprising for a print publisher who played such an essential role in printmaking during the sixteenth century. Yet one could question if this is desirable for an exhibition catalogue. The volume can be purchased for 95 US dollars, which is generally considered the top range for a catalogue. Is the general public willing to pay this amount for an exhibition catalogue? Or does this imply that the publication is aimed at an audience of specialists? The question is really a moot point, as in my view the catalogue will meet the demands of both the general public and an audience of specialists.

The exhibition catalogue is visually appealing; it is printed on thick paper and the graphic design has been given a lot of attention. The quality of the images is excellent, enabling the viewer to scrutinize even the smallest detail, which is not the case in every catalogue. However, the decision to depict prints from specific print series in different formats is unfortunate. This can probably be explained from a publisher’s point of view, as it can assure that the