

**MARKET KNOWLEDGE:
THE PHILOSOPHIC INSTRUMENT TRADE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
ENGLAND**

A Thesis Submitted to the College
Of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of philosophic instrument-makers within the eighteenth-century philosophic instrument trade in Britain. The instrument-maker functioned in both the realms of the philosophic elite and the burgeoning eighteenth-century public marketplace. Faced with the task of balancing the contradictory scholarly expectations of natural philosophers and the monetary pressures of the public market, these craftsmen employed sophisticated marketing strategies to reconcile these opposing realms. This project examines the careers of several London instrument-makers and their attempts to gain and maintain solid standing among philosophic circles, while using that standing to their commercial advantage in the instrument trade. By examining the way instrument-makers marketed their products one can glean insight into the role philosophic credibility played in shaping the successful instrument makers' career and how the materials of experimental philosophy were promoted to a public increasingly interested in consuming natural philosophy.

This enquiry addresses several types of marketing techniques employed by instrument-makers in their efforts to sell their wares. However, patenting strategies receive particularly close attention as they reveal the tension found between the scholarly expectations among the philosophic elite and the commercial priority of the public marketplace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Larry Stewart, for his guidance and support. I am deeply indebted to him as his knowledge and scholarly advice were invaluable to this project's success.

I also owe a debt to my knowledgeable committee members Dr. John McCannon and Dr. Frank Klaassen. Their thorough reading and helpful suggestions greatly benefited this thesis.

Furthermore, this thesis would have never materialized without the generous financial support from the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan and Situating Science: Cluster for the Humanist and Social Studies of Science.

I would also like to give a special thanks to Dr. P.J. Kennedy who provided me with summer employment, valuable advice, enlightened conversation, and constant encouragement.

Finally, I must thank those friends and family members whose indefatigable patience and loving support helped guide me through this project. Specifically, I must thank my parents. Without your warm encouragement this could never have been possible.

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