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*Entre belles-lettres et disciplines: Les savoirs au XVIIIe siècle.* Edited by Franck Salaün and Jean-Pierre Schandeler. Ferney-Voltaire: Centre internationale d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2011. 202 pp. Pb 40.00 Euros.

The present volume is a collection of articles, edited and brilliantly introduced by Salaün and Schandeler, that deals with the ambiguity surrounding scholarly disciplines in the eighteenth century, and the polymathic nature of intellectual life in the period. Unlike our own world, in which scholarly practice is divided between disciplines with clearly demarcated boundaries, methods, practices, and canonical texts, the Enlightenment functioned without compartmentalizing thinkers into particular fields. The contributors to this volume are particularly interested in understanding the relationship between literature and 'science' (defined broadly). In the 1660s, Academy of Sciences in Paris announced that it dealt with 'toutes sortes de littérature' (9), and there was nothing contradictory about natural philosophers conceptualizing themselves as literary figures—although, as the contributors point out, modern disciplines did begin to take shape in the latter part of the century, which subsequently created tensions between intellectual circles. However, what defined the "gens de lettres" of the period was commitment to knowledge, practices of sociability, and refined taste—not an allegiance to this or that discipline or "art." Robert Mankin's essay on Edward Gibbon shows the extent to which the latter defined 'littérature' in broad terms and saw it as compatible with

(and useful for) his 'science of antiquity' (44). The essay by Marc J. Ratcliff shows that the growing interest in scientific nomenclature and taxonomies in the period reflected not only an interest in systems of classification but also in language, literature, and terminology. Olivier Ferret argues that the term 'philosophe' applied equally to literary and scientific thinkers. Catherine Volpilhac-Augier discusses the many hats worn by Montesquieu: natural philosopher, academician, historian, early political theorist. Jeanne Peiffer shows that the *Journal des savants* went to great lengths to avoid specificity and instead preferred a universal and dynamic approach to intellectual commerce. The essays in this volume are generally concise and well argued—rarely are they off topic—and the editors set up the volume's essays with an excellent introduction. Salaün and Schandeler have succeeded in bringing together an important volume that offers perhaps the most thorough treatment to date of the polymathic nature of the European Enlightenment, before universities in the nineteenth century sharpened the differences between scholarly fields.

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