and found their own voices, albeit anonymously, in the practice of their craft:

THE POET OF THE FUTURE
Hiding His Light Under the Bushel of the Specimen-Book.

Alastair Johnston’s extraordinary book is by turns witty, informed, challenging, joyful, and provocative. He has profound sympathy for his self-created subject, and has the commitment and knowledge to convince us of its importance. This delightful study should appeal to anyone interested in language, sociology, printing history, and humanity.

Readers interested in seeing further examples of the textual and graphic wit of nineteenth-century job compositors might like to consult one of the editions of the typographic volume of Clarence P. Hornung’s Handbook of Early Advertising Art, published by Dover Publications.

WILLIAM RUETER
Dundas, Ontario


The new Cambridge History of the Book in Britain begins in medias res with the third of seven projected volumes, covering the period from 1400 to 1557. On the basis of this volume we can look forward to a national history which will fulfill its mandate well and complement both the existing and forthcoming accounts of the book elsewhere in Europe and in the English-speaking world.

The period the volume covers is demarcated by shifts in technology, most notably the arrival of print in 1476, in the organization of the book trade, and to a considerable extent in the nature of the contents of books, particularly in the wake of the
Reformation. The opening of the volume marks both the death of Chaucer and the beginnings of important changes in the organization of personnel in the book trade; the conclusion by the printing of the English edition of the works of Thomas More, the granting of a royal charter to the Stationers' Company, and (within a year) the arrival on the throne of Elizabeth. In any multi-volume series demarcations are always difficult. This division is eminently reasonable.

The volume builds on very strong traditions of English book history and bibliography. While "l'histoire du livre" as a discipline is often associated with French scholarship, the necessary and by no means merely preliminary activities – of the publication of records, and of the enumeration and description of manuscripts and early printed books – has achieved in the work of English-speaking scholars and librarians a level of comprehensiveness and sophistication which continental book historians could only envy. Denys Hay's appeal in the 1960s for a "continental STC" has still not borne fruit. By contrast, Arber's transcriptions of the records of the Stationers' Company had been issued by 1894, Pollard and Redgrave's first edition of their Short-Title Catalogue by 1926, and Neil Ker's catalogue of surviving books from medieval libraries by 1941. Nor did the Bibliographical Society have any significant rivals on the continent. To a certain extent, to be sure, this activity could be more easily envisaged in England, given both the smaller surviving corpus of manuscripts and printed books, and the much greater centralization of English political and intellectual life and of the book trade by the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp and their contributors can build on very impressive scholarly accomplishments. Moreover, ongoing projects such as the Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues and the Private Libraries of Renaissance England complement and supplement the conclusions of the collection's collaborators.

The volume opens with an introduction by the co-editors and a brief survey of "literacy, books and readers" by Trapp. Three large divisions follow: "Technique and Trade," consisting of seven essays, notably including Hellinga's account of printing, Paul Christianson's treatment of the rise of the book-trade in London, and Paul Needham's discussion of customs-rolls as sources for information on the trade; "Collections and Ownership," containing five essays, including Margaret Lane Ford's survey of private ownership of early printed books, and the accounts of the Royal Library by Jenny
Stratford, who covers the period up to 1461, Janet Backhouse, who spans the reigns of Edward IV to Henry VII, and James Carley, who discusses it during the reign of Henry VIII; and “Reading and the Uses of Books,” the latter further divided into sections describing “Books for Scholars,” which includes essays by Trapp on “the humanist book,” Elisabeth Leedham-Green on the universities, and a case-study by E.J. Ashworth on logic texts, “Professions,” including essays by R.M. Helmholz and Alain Wijffels on canon and civil law, and “The Lay Reader,” with seven essays, including Nicholas Orme on school-books, Mary C. Erler on devotional literature, and Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards on literary works.

Many of the essays are truly ground-breaking. This is particularly evident in the studies in collections and ownership, all of which incorporate new research. Margaret Ford’s discussion of book ownership, based on a much larger sample than previously available, provides exciting new conclusions about patterns of ownership of early printed books, particularly when it is read in relation to her account of book importation in the previous chapter. James Carley’s discussion of the library of Henry VIII links the evidence of the inventory of 1542 with physical evidence from surviving manuscripts and printed books. In the essays devoted to readership, Trapp’s account of humanism and book culture brings together a breathtaking range of material; Elisabeth Leedham-Green synthesizes evidence from library catalogues, inventories of private libraries, and book-sellers’ records in her exhilarating account of the universities.

Where the collection is somewhat weaker is in its discussion of book production and the book trade. To some extent this is the result of editorial decisions about exclusions which are described by the editors in their introduction. Questions of manuscript production will be addressed more comprehensively in the forthcoming second volume. Moreover, the editors had no wish to duplicate the ground covered in Griffiths and Pearsall’s Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475 (1989). Nonetheless, the exclusion of manuscript production inevitably detracts from the comprehensive character of the volume, as does the very limited treatment of book production and circulation outside London and the universities. In addition, there might have been more detail in the treatment of printing in Westminster and London, and more attention to the personnel and the corporate structure of the trade, particularly in the sixteenth century.
This is also in many respects a very conservative volume in appearance and layout, certainly in comparison to *L'Histoire de l'édition française*. Sixty-four pages of black-and-white plates are gathered at the end of the volume. Several of the essays would have benefitted significantly both from more and better-placed illustrations. Hellinga's discussion of typography and of printing-types in England, for example, suffers from the absence of more extensive illustrations, as does M.M. Foot's account of binding. Inevitably too, in a book which is the result of such a long process of gestation and production, new technologies outpace editorial decisions. Editors of subsequent volumes in the series may well make greater efforts to link their work to on-going and newly emerging forms of computer and web-based scholarship.

In spite of these quibbles, this is a book whose strengths far outweigh its occasional weaknesses. All serious libraries will buy it; all students in the field will consult it regularly. Hellinga and Trapp and their collaborators have produced a volume which gets the *Cambridge History* off to a very fine start and certainly whets this reader's appetite for more.

DAVID GALBRAITH

*University of Toronto*


If you have never met Wallace Kirsope, you don't go out much. If you have never read any of his papers, you don't read much. If you have never even heard of Wallace Kirsope, then you are probably not interested in bibliography or the history of the book. These thirty-five essays published as an *hommage* to Kirsope on his retirement from Monash University constitute an exceptional *festschrift*. Unfortunately it is impossible for this reviewer to comment on all of the articles and I have concerned myself mainly with those dealing with French book history, having had some experience in the field.

Wallace Kirsope was the founder of the *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand* and the editor of the *Australian Journal*