quelques pages chacun de problématiques littéraires bien particulières, intéressantes soit, mais qui cadrent mal avec l’uniformité des articles consacrés aux œuvres. Par ailleurs, on peut s’interroger sur les motifs à la base de cet ajout, alors que plusieurs questions d’ordre plus général auraient demandées à être traitées de la même façon. L’inclusion d’articles thématiques, qui par leur trop petit nombre, deux sur 800, nuit en définitive à l’uniformité de l’ouvrage.

Malgré une introduction un peu lourde et difficile à suivre, et quelques choix éditoriaux contestables, il faut reconnaître l’importance d’un ouvrage de référence comme le DOLQ. L’entreprise devient titanesque avec les années, étant donné le nombre toujours croissant de publications. Le mérite de l’équipe du DOLQ et des collaborateurs n’en est que plus grand. L’intérêt des chercheurs, des professeurs, des lecteurs et des étudiants à détailler, à observer et, parfois aussi, à critiquer un nouveau tome du DOLQ témoigne de la pertinence et surtout de l’utilité d’une telle publication pour les études littéraires.

ÉLISE SALAÜN
Université de Sherbrooke


Avant-garde poetry in the United States during the twentieth century was deeply fortunate to be championed by a series of supportive publishers willing to risk their capital and their reputations on cutting-edge work. James Laughlin was the first of these, and if he did not exactly discover Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams and other modernist poets, he certainly helped to keep their work in print and to make it widely available through his New Directions imprint. In the 1950s, Jonathan Williams did some of the same service for the next generation (Charles Olson, Ronald Johnson, and others) through his Jargon Society. Even more than Laughlin, Williams put a highly personal stamp on his list by bringing out the work of poets like Mina Loy (a first-generation modernist who had slipped below the cultural radar) and Lorine Niedecker, among many others – poets who wrote wonderful, sometimes eccentric poems that deserved an
audience, even if they were not in quite the same class as Olson or Louis Zukofsky.

In the 1960s, the successor to these highly influential publishers was John Martin, and under the imprint of his Black Sparrow Press began to appear the work of a postmodern generation of American poets that was directly in the line of predecessors like Pound, Williams, and Olson. Martin was a bibliophile and, apparently, the manager of an office supply company in Los Angeles when, in 1966, he decided to found a publishing house initially to bring out the work of the Los Angeles poet Charles Bukowski. Bukowski just may be one of the most overrated writers in American literary history; but that is secondary to the fact that his work so appealed to John Martin that he put him on retainer ($100 per month was enough for Bukowski to live on!) and sold his private collection of D.H. Lawrence in order to finance both Bukowski’s life and Black Sparrow Press. As far as I know, Martin chose and edited all of his books; and the Black Sparrow list over the next twenty-five years and more (Martin did not actually retire until 2002) would include some of the best poets in the United States (Robert Duncan, Ed Dorn, Robert Kelly, Robert Creeley et al.), as well as one Canadian (Daphne Marlatt). The list eventually broadened to include earlier twentieth-century writers such as Wyndham Lewis, Charles Reznikoff, John Fante, D.H. Lawrence, William Everson, and George Oppen, but Martin never lost interest in younger writers, and was seemingly as devoted to Wanda Coleman as he was to Robert Kelly.

Selling his Lawrence collection was not John Martin’s only financial ploy where Black Sparrow Press was concerned. He was quick to recognize two ingredients essential to the credit side of the ledger where the publishing of poetry was concerned, and he used both quite astutely. The first was the limited edition gambit. Almost every Black Sparrow Press book was published in three issues: a paperback (500 copies in the early days, substantially more later on), a hardback (for the libraries), and a limited edition of the hardback with original drawings or some other feature (to appeal to collectors). The books were all designed by Martin’s wife, Barbara, and they always looked appealing. They do not aspire to the level of a Bird & Bull Press book, say, but they are indisputably several notches above typical commercial poetry books. As a result they have been widely collected by both private collectors and institutions.

Martin’s other fiscal recognition was the value of his archives. Only three years after the press was founded in 1966 he was able to
sell the first accession of Black Sparrow papers to the University of Alberta for US $23,000; and if that sum sounds modest now it must have seemed substantial then to both seller and buyer. The University of Alberta continued to acquire additional files for only a brief period before bringing the arrangement to a stop; but Martin found willing buyers elsewhere – Penn State, the University of New Mexico, the University of Arizona, and finally the Bancroft Library at Berkeley – and was always able to contribute to the press’s ongoing financial health in this way. Michael Macklem of Oberon Press had a similar idea at much the same time, although he was lucky enough to find an archive (Queen’s University) that stuck with him. I recall him remarking once that, where archives were concerned, “there are two of everything and everything can be sold twice.” In other words, smart authors and publishers keep copies, with the result that the Macklem-Souster correspondence, for example, could be sold as part of the papers of both correspondents.

A Bibliography of the Black Sparrow Press Archive is a printed inventory of the Black Sparrow material now at Alberta. It covers some ninety-four broadsides, pamphlets, and books published between 1966 (a broadside by Bukowski) and 1970 (10 Poems for 10 Poets by Gerald Malanga, one of Andy Warhol’s Factory crew). The material is meticulously described, file by file, and typically the files contain much the same material for each book: manuscripts, proofs, drawings, file copies of the book, and letters from the writers. (Carbons of Martin’s side of the correspondence were, oddly, not included, and the compilers of the inventory rightly call this “a sizeable gap in the archive.”) The book is handsomely designed and printed, and is nicely decorated with some of Charles Bukowski’s loopy versions of the black sparrow itself, who looks rather like a Leonard Baskin crow with a few beers under his belt. It seems to me that elaborate printed inventories like this one probably have a dim future, since publishing them on the Web is so much cheaper and more effective. Indeed this one is also available electronically. But as long as anyone is willing still to issue them, I, for one, am happy to have them.

Apart from some typos (David, not Charles, Godine [p. 1] bought Black Sparrow Press from John Martin, for example) and one annoying typographical convention adopted for the book (fractions in the measurements of books are raised and given in a small point-size, as though they were superscripts), my main complaint about A Bibliography of the Black Sparrow Press Archive is its solecistic title. In
no sense at all is this book a bibliography. That it has some bibliographical descriptions embedded in it (reprinted, unnecessarily in my view, from Morrow and Cooney’s *Bibliography of the Black Sparrow Press*) is true; but while the list of an archive may be called a finding-aid, an inventory, even a guide, a bibliography it isn’t. It is surprising to find such confusion over elementary terminology inscribed over a project that, otherwise, has been very well carried out and will be of great use to everyone who studies postmodern American poetry.

BRUCE WHITEMAN

*William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA*


That book history is achieving popular status and reaching a mass audience is amply illustrated by this volume. Its dust jacket, illustrated with a burning book against a black background, captures the eye even in crowded bookstores. The provocative but singularly unrevealing title is clearly meant to pique one’s curiosity. Closer inspection reveals, however, that this is the story of Michael Servetus (1511-1553), one of the most intriguing figures in the history of religion and medicine.

The authors, Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone, are popularizers with previously published volumes on book collecting and other topics, some fictional. The book is not footnoted but does conclude with a four-page essay, “Bibliographic Notes,” a bibliography of mostly secondary works, and an “Acknowledgments” essay thanking various individuals and institutions for advice and support.

Despite being a work of secondary synthesis, offering few if any insights based upon primary research, it is a well told tale, along with appropriate contexts. In fact, this is an easily accessible introduction to a large and complex story, whose ramifications stretch across many centuries and interact with many topics. Born in Spain, Servetus was a highly intelligent man with a penchant for controversy. After receiving his early education, he went to the University of