Cornélius D'éom et Henri Tranquille, le second en mettant en parallèle l'état actuel du système éditorial québécois et les principales mutations qui l'ont affecté depuis la fin du XIXe siècle. Enfin, à partir d'une source unique en son genre au sein du recueil, soit le fichier des prêts de la Bibliothèque de la ville de Québec pour l'année 1996, Baillargeon, qui dresse le portrait des usagers de cette bibliothèque et des livres qu'ils empruntent, n'explore pas tant la question de la médiation qu'il ne s'approche de la lecture dite réelle.

L'héritage de la sociologie de la littérature (Bourdieu, Dubois, Escarpit, Jauss) est manifeste dans presque tous les textes – l'étude de Robert Yergeau sur le mécénat d'État est d'ailleurs davantage une contribution à l'analyse institutionnelle qu'à celle de la lecture –, et les idées de Genette et de D.F. McKenzie, quoique rarement nommé pour le dernier, sont sans contredit un pilier fondamental de la réflexion développée par les auteurs qui abordent de front la question de la médiation. Plusieurs des études de cas (Boisclair, Hébert, Robert, Brisson) mettent à profit un éclairage théorique qui saura être utile à d'autres chercheurs, et certains textes (Nachbauer, Vannucci, Hébert, Vincent) dépassent la question de la lecture strictement littéraire, contrairement à ce qui est annoncé en introduction. Si le grand mérite de l'ouvrage est de contribuer à l'avancement des connaissances sur un objet particulièrement difficile à cerner et à documenter, la principale critique qu'on pourrait lui adresser est de reposer sur une organisation paresseuse, qui n'exploite pas à leur pleine mesure les multiples liens que les textes entretiennent entre eux. Le collectif n'en demeure pas moins fort intéressant, mais il ne contribue pas vraiment à développer et à enrichir le concept de médiation, qu'il revient dès lors au lecteur d'approfondir lui-même.

SOPHIE MONTREUIL
McGill University


In the golden age of the fine press movement, T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, who founded the Doves Press with Emery Walker in 1900, stands out as a man of absolute principle and uncompromising ideals. He did
not have the influence or the stature of his mentor, William Morris. Unlike Morris, Cobden-Sanderson’s impact on the decorative arts was minimal. A bibliophilic perfectionist, he was not the type of man who wished to transform society. He espoused a singular cosmic vision of the “Book Beautiful,” designed “to attack the problem of Typography, as presented by ordinary Books” (i). In the books of the Kelmscott Press, produced under direction of Morris and his associates, one discovers a love of calligraphy and the inspiration of the Pre-Raphaelites. In this creative atmosphere Cobden-Sanderson spent his apprenticeship before he established the Doves Bindery in 1893. Books of the Kelmscott Press are often ornate and medieval in appearance, adorned with extraordinary illustrations by Burne-Jones and others. It is not so with Cobden-Sanderson and the books of the Doves Press. With the exception of the opening pages of his masterpiece books, such as Paradise Lost (1902) and The English Bible (1903–05), decorated with red initials, the books of the Doves Press are elegant and simple, printed in black without any illustrations, using a Roman typeface similar to that of Nicolas Jenson. The contrast in the books of these two fine presses tells a story in itself, and is a reflection of the unique personalities of Morris and Cobden-Sanderson.

A former librarian, who worked at several American university libraries before settling in England in 1972, Marianne Tidcombe is a bookbinding historian. The Doves Press is her third book on Cobden-Sanderson. The Bookbindings of T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (1984), based on his Time Book at the British Library, where he recorded the details of his bindings, was followed up in 1991 with a more extensive examination entitled The Doves Bindery. Cobden-Sanderson bound over 200 books with his own hand and supervised over 1,000 more at his Bindery. His personal bindings and those executed at his Bindery are works of art, all thought out harmoniously with great attention to detail. They are exquisitely bound, often in morocco or vellum, with flowery designs, gold tooling, gauffered fore-edges, round recessed cords and patterned end leaves.

The Doves Press is a publishing history and a fascinating account of Cobden-Sanderson’s fanatical devotion to fine printing, book design, and production. It narrates the large story of his philosophical outlook, establishment of the Doves Press, his tempestuous partnership with Walker, biographical portraits of those who worked at the Press, cutting and design of the Doves type, a descriptive bibliography of the Press’s imprints and ephemera, dissolution of the Press, Cobden-Sanderson’s wilful destruction of the Doves type, and the
lawsuit that ensued between Walker and Annie Cobden-Sanderson after Cobden-Sanderson’s death. *The Doves Press* is smartly designed with a profusion of over 100 black-and-white illustrations and notes, often located in wide, generous margins. There is a separate section of coloured plates that reproduce in stunning brilliance pages of Doves books. Tidcombe’s book has also been enhanced with the presence of Cobden-Sanderson’s credos and statements, correspondence, inventories, legal agreements and opinions, and various appendices.

“My books are my poems, and they, I hope, will speak for me when I am far hence . . .” wrote Cobden-Sanderson in his *Journals* (II: 240). Not only did Cobden-Sanderson destroy the Doves type, he consciously set out to purge most of his own archives and those of the Press. The surviving archival documents present a distorted picture—a case in point being Cobden-Sanderson’s edited *Journals*, which make no mention of Walker at all. The broad outline of Cobden-Sanderson’s conflicts with Walker has been well known for some time. Tidcombe’s rendition of this story is compelling in its detail. In the initial stages of their partnership Walker took an active interest in the day-to-day activities of the Doves Press, but soon thereafter his involvement and supervision diminished considerably. Instead of discussing the upsetting nature of Walker’s decreasing role in the Press with Walker himself, Cobden-Sanderson kept silent on the matter. His resentment against his partner built and festered. In spite of Sydney Cockerell’s repeated attempts to act as a peacemaker, the partnership dissolved on less than amicable terms in 1909. Although Cobden-Sanderson continued his work in the Press until 1916, he plotted much earlier to ensure that no one, especially Walker, would ever get their hands on his beloved type. Like Charles Ricketts, who consigned the punches and matrices of the Vale Press to the River Thames in 1903, Cobden-Sanderson gradually disposed of the Doves type in the same watery grave. He considered its disposal in this manner as an act of consecration: “To the Bed of the River Thames, the river on whose banks I have printed all my printed books, I bequeath The Doves Press Fount of Type ... and may the river in its tides and flow pass over them to and from the great sea for ever and for ever” (*Journals*, II: 181–2). For a period of five months, commencing on 31 August 1916, on his evening strolls to the Hammersmith Bridge, he carried bundles of type in his pockets and dropped them into the river. Its destruction was a criminal act of vandalism in clear violation of the terms of his partnership with Walker, which entitled Walker to the type, punches, and matrices of
the Press after Cobden-Sanderson’s death. It is to Tidcombe’s credit and diligence that she has been able to reconstruct this complex web in an interesting and dispassionate manner from a wide variety of sources and collections, taking into account Cobden-Sanderson’s genius, egotism, and deceit.

In all respects this is a carefully crafted work of scholarship. It is equally strong in the history of printing and bibliography and in its biographical assessments of the players in this tragicomedy. A collection of material that Tidcombe has neglected to use resides in the Bertrand Russell archives at McMaster University Library. The collection consists of more than 20 books and pieces of ephemera of the Doves Press in Russell’s library and 15 letters from Cobden-Sanderson to Russell. Cobden-Sanderson went to Cambridge University with Russell’s father, Viscount Amberley, and he remained very close friends with Amberley, and his wife Kate, until their untimely deaths in the 1870s. On his deathbed Viscount Amberley directed that Bertrand Russell and his older brother Frank were to be raised by Cobden-Sanderson and Frank’s tutor, D.A. Spalding, but Russell’s paternal grandparents interceded in this arrangement, and the two Russell children were raised by Lady John Russell. One of the most personal imprints of the Doves Press is Cobden-Sanderson’s correspondence with the Amberleys entitled *Amantium Irae: Letters to Two Friends* 1864–1867 (1914). In her description of this book Tidcombe suggests that Cobden-Sanderson’s letters to the Amberleys contain the germ of his cosmic vision of the “Book Beautiful.” She then commits a charming howler: “Cobden-Sanderson and Lady Amberley became so close that a rumour arose that Cobden-Sanderson was Bertrand’s father” (181–82). In fact, the man who slept with Russell’s mother was Spalding, not Cobden-Sanderson. Russell recounts the story in the first volume of his *Autobiography*. In his book *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930) Russell does not mention Cobden-Sanderson by name in the following tribute clearly intended for him: “I knew a man once who was the best compositor in the world, and was sought out by all those who devoted themselves to inventing artistic types; he derived joy, not so much from the genuine respect in which he was held by persons whose respect was not lightly bestowed, as from the actual delight in the exercise of his craft, a delight not wholly unlike that which good dancers derive from dancing” (150).

CARL SPADONI  
*Mcmaster University Library*