quelques remarques, il reste que cette étude ambitieuse et savante apporte une contribution importante et un éclairage nuancé sur la manière dont s'est constitué un récit commun autour d'un document qui a fait tour à tour l'objet de scandale, de récupération politique et de revendication sociale.

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Carl Dair, *Epistles to the Torontonians: With Articles from the Canadian Printer & Publisher* (Toronto, ON/New Castle, DE: Coach House Press with Sheridan College and Oak Knoll Press, 2015), 130 pp. plus DVD. US \$75 (cloth) ISBN 9781584563396

When Carl Dair, the Ontario-born graphic designer and typographer, was awarded a fellowship by the Royal Society of Canada in 1956 to spend a year in Europe, primarily in the Netherlands to study type design and punch-cutting at the famous Joh. Enschedé en Zonen Type Foundry in Haarlem, metal typesetting was already headed toward obsolescence. Yet Dair, who by the mid-1950s had established himself as a successful freelance designer in Toronto, was interested in designing and casting the country's first native Latin typeface, and keen to learn from one of the master punch cutters of the twentieth century — and certainly one of the last — Paul Rädisch. In his original proposal to the Royal Society for the grant, he claimed, in one of the letters captured in this wonderful collection, that a new typeface can “best emerge if a lettering artist works directly, with his own hand, to create letters in steel. Time will confirm or refute the thesis!” (38).

Joh. Enschedé, established in 1703, was one of the most celebrated printers and type manufacturers in the world, and its type business had gained international acclaim by the time Dair arrived, largely due to the type designs of Jan van Krimpen. Dair could barely contain his enthusiasm for the year-long opportunity, what he called “the dizzy heights” of his apprenticeship. This book, sumptuously designed by Stan Bevington at Toronto's Coach House Press, gathers and reproduces the primary materials created by Dair to record his time spent in Holland. These reproductions (rather than transcriptions), enable the reader to admire Dair's gorgeous, easily legible cursive in his letters, or “epistles” as he refers to them, written to his Toronto friends, chronicling his life and work in Europe over the year. (The

originals are held in the Carl Dair fonds in the Robertson Davies Library at the University of Toronto's Massey College.)

The book has two other sections as well. The second is a few pages devoted to the typeface created by Dair, Cartier, which began its life during his year in Holland. It includes reproductions of the original proof designs, some examples of the font used commercially — including, most famously, in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms — along with a note from Rod McDonald on Cartier's "checkered history," pointing out that the font never attracted widespread usage in the graphic arts community. (McDonald has since given Cartier a new life by re-designing it as a digital font, Cartier Book, in 1997.)

The last section consists of eight articles, published between 1957 and 1960, written for the trade magazine *Canadian Printer & Publisher* largely expounding upon the research Dair conducted while in Europe. These include an examination of whether the Haarlem native Laurens Janzoon Coster invented movable type printing in Europe before Gutenberg (Dair disputes it), a detailed "how to" (complete with diagrams) on punch cutting foundry types in steel, and a profile of the master cutter Rädisch, including a thorough examination of his technique.

But the letters back home to Toronto's typography community, missives intended to be shared with the community, form the heart of the book. In the first letter, dated 18 August 1956, written to Franklyn and Sheila Smith, Dair provides a distribution list of five couples. A quibble: the introduction provides no information about these recipients and their relation to Dair. In fact, the reviewer had to seek out the fonds' finding aid at Massey College for the identification of "Frank and Sheila" in the first letter. The book could use a more fulsome introduction, including some additional biographical information about Dair.

Both the letters and the *Canadian Printer & Publisher* articles demonstrate Dair as an engaging and talented writer. (Given that most of the epistles are in ink, one wonders whether he wrote drafts, or whether these well-written missives are in fact first and only drafts.) His passion for type and its history — Dair was also a prodigious collector of incunabula, which is now housed at Massey College (a collection which, the letters reveal, he added to during the year he spent abroad) — is lively and infectious. In particular, his detailed observations of his interactions with the typographical legends he meets in Holland, including Jan Tschichold, Jan van Krimpen, Sem L. Hartz, and, of

course, Rädisch, are fascinating, sharing both techniques learned from these men, as well as the occasional tidbit of gossip. The epistle devoted solely to Tschichold ("Chapter Two" — oddly, there is no Chapter One published) is especially evocative, touching on larger social issues — the rise of Hitler and Nazism, primarily — that informed Tschichold's typographical work from the early 1930s onward. During their four-and-a-half-hour meeting, Dair captures Tschichold's brilliance, along with his seeming melancholic spirit, writing: "Let nothing I may say from here on cast any devaluation on that man; he was, and is, the typographic genius of our epoch. / But he is a lonely man, / he is a hurt man, / he is a frightened man" (19).

For the type geek, there is much to feast on, as many of the letters detail the "nuts and bolts" of the dying craft of metal punch cutting. (One of the epistles is devoted to whether the process itself is an art or a craft.) And what better person to learn from than Rädisch — even the language barrier ("Rädisch has a knowledge of English only slightly less fragmentary than my Dutch" [29]) is helpful since Dair must depend on actual demonstration rather than on verbal description. In turn, however, Dair is able to accurately depict the process itself in the letters back to Toronto: from "peering through the magnifying glasses not more than two inches from the work" (29) through to the finger work involved in the engraving, to understanding the tools and digging into the metal to create the type. For example, he writes: "In punch-cutting, it is the non-letter areas which are important; the letter exists only as a line to be followed. The purity of the surface is of little consequence except that it should not be worked upon, either by chance or mischance. But the surfaces which are cut are important, and they must have finish ... the shoulder and the bottoms, both within the letter & outside it" (29–30).

The letters are rich with stories about Dair's typographical education, including "smoke proofs" (test impressions of a typesetter's punch obtained by blackening it in a flame and stamping it on paper) of his self-created font, which are essentially the first very early drafts of what would eventually become Cartier. But he also writes about social conditions in Europe, pointing to the "filth" of cities still recovering, a full decade later, from the ravages of the Second World War.

Dair's letters were obviously well received back in Canada. For example, he writes about the feedback he received from his epistle on Tschichold, and on being encouraged to publish it — and his reluctance for its publication: "I'm pleased that my account of the evening with Tschichold filled the bill from both a literary &

an information point of view. I think I've assessed the man very accurately, but I feel that it's a rather personal document, and when I express opinions about the reasons for Tschichold's line of reasoning, it was a document for close friends back home. To put this in print, would give it a value as a printed document which someone, someday, might be tempted to reprint, and there are things said in confidence by Tschichold which he might be annoyed at my passing along, some of it perhaps not too complimentary" (14).

There are some structural oddities with the book, particularly around the placement of the letters. The note referencing the epistle mentioned above, for example, is made several pages before we get to read it for ourselves. As well, either several epistles are missing or Dair himself has not numbered them correctly: there's a Chapter 6 and Number 9, but no Chapters 7 or 8. And since many of the epistles and many of the letters do not carry dates, the reader is unsure whether there are in fact missing sections. Two letters written by Dair's wife Edith, primarily concerning her pottery studies, seem out of place as well. There is also one small printing error, as the first page of one of the letters is printed twice.

As a bonus to the book, a DVD is also included, featuring colour film footage shot by Dair of Rädisch forging a single piece of type. Entitled "Carl Dair at Enschedé: The Last Days of Metal Type" and running thirty-seven minutes,¹ the film is a co-production of Sheridan College and Massey College featuring voiceover narration by Matthew Carter, a typeface designer who also studied with Rädisch, overlapping with Dair. In total, this rich and rare resource details the last days of the dying craft, and there is no better narrator than Dair to chronicle the practice before its final obsolescence.

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Gayle Garlock, *Canadian Binders' Tickets and Booksellers' Labels* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2015), 158 pp. plus CD. US \$95 (cloth) ISBN 9781584563372

Gayle Garlock's *Canadian Binders' Tickets and Booksellers' Labels* is a noteworthy addition to the history of the book. Along with

¹ See <https://vimeo.com/138762227> for a preview.