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Grafton, Anthony. The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe

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The translators offer a short but interesting discussion of the fourteenth-century Tuscan in which Margherita wrote. They further discuss the difficult problems of rendering this Tuscan into a modern, readable English. The texts themselves are composed of long compound sentences that, if translated literally, would be confusing run-on sentences. The translators wisely have broken them up. They also have tried to maintain a modern translation that captures the informal, conversational tone of the original. There are times, however, when the translation seems too literal. When speaking of sheep, the text may literally say *castrato* or castrated sheep, where “wether” would seem closer to everyday English (77). Or similarly, the translators use “rubella” when “measles” may come closer to translating everyday speech, at least for North Americans (129). These are rather modest complaints in translations that otherwise seem clean and very well annotated. This collection of letters makes available to English readers an everyday side of female experience in late medieval and Renaissance Italy that is not easy to find.

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Grafton, Anthony.

The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe.

The Panizzi Lectures, 2009. London: The British Library, 2011. Pp. xii, 244 + 59 ill. ISBN 978-0-7123-5845-3 (hardcover) \$45.

The British Library’s Panizzi Lectures debuted in 1985 with D. F. McKenzie’s influential meditation on the implications for meaning of the material form of books. The now familiar title of his lectures, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, paired a traditional analytical method with an advanced theoretical consideration and, in doing so, neatly captured McKenzie’s unique contribution to the field. The meaning of the latest published title in the series is less apparent, reflecting as it seems to do another area of expertise. McKenzie was at the time Professor of Textual Studies at Oxford University; Anthony Grafton is currently Professor of European History at Princeton University. Grafton’s title suggests an interest more in discipline and punishment than in books or textual criticism, and the image on the front might easily be confused with a teacher

lecturing his pupils, in light of both the title and some of Grafton's previous publications. There is no subtitle to suggest otherwise. But although Grafton has focused more in the past on the history of reading than on the history of printing, and arguably has broader professional interests than McKenzie, he has never been one either to ignore textual details or to indulge in Foucauldian commonplaces. Readers looking for a Foucault fix will have misjudged the book by its cover: "This short book seeks to recreate the lost world of press correctors" (1). Instead, Grafton, with no less brilliance than McKenzie, neatly fulfills the original mandate Lord Quinton set for the Panizzi Lectures in the preface to McKenzie's published lectures in 1985: "bibliography in the most inclusive sense of the word, ranging from history and literary criticism by way of typography to the physical constitution of written and printed matter, embracing manuscripts, music and maps as well as books in a narrower sense, and reaching out to take in the social and commercial circumstances of their publication (vii–viii)."

In meeting this mandate, Grafton concerns himself primarily with the technical side of correction. Books printed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries often promised readers texts that had been newly altered and corrected, but the precise nature of these emendations, and more importantly the persons responsible for them, could not always be trusted even in those few instances where it was specified. When Andrew Wise advertised *THE HISTORY OF HENRIE THE FOVRTH* in 1599 as "Newly corrected by W. Shakespeare" and *THE TRAGEDIE of King Richard the third* in 1602 as "Newly augmented, By William Shakespeare," for instance, it did not matter that Shakespeare had made no such contributions; his name (with or without his permission) was all that was thought to be needed to attract customers. Textual scholars who work backward from such cultural products to the conditions of their production tend only to uncover more lies. Grafton avoids this problem by beginning in the print shop where those actually responsible for making such corrections thought of themselves as engaged in honest work, however maligned it might have been in the outside world; those such as John Foxe, who was employed as a corrector long before he made his name as the compiler of the book of martyrs that commonly bears his name. In the first of his four chapters, Grafton outlines specifically what this work was and how it was perceived in the Renaissance. In fact, as Grafton quickly establishes, the press correctors' roles were so numerous, despite the clear division of labour in the print shop, that correctors

are best understood more generally as “print professionals” (13): they could be responsible for anything from proof-reading and compiling indexes, to preparing, formatting, translating, and sometimes even writing texts. They did not think of themselves as defrauding the public, as Shakespeare’s editors sometimes think of them doing, but as collaborators in the joint effort of producing reliable and useful texts. Press correctors were fully alert to both the textual and moral meaning of “emendo” and were as quick to fault themselves for their own errors as they were to criticize others. Grafton participates in this culture when, likening himself to Renaissance print professionals, he admits that mistakes in his own book are certain to have escaped his notice, such as the following two “little ironies” (46): “that the there” (106–07) and “Grafton, Anthony Graton” (225). The remaining three chapters are as learned and informative as readers have come to expect from Grafton, who manages to wear his learning lightly, ranging throughout Europe with the assurance of a modern-day Erasmus, commenting in detail upon the correction of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts (all of which are amply illustrated) with as much ease as he adduces those in English or French. Less expert readers are able to keep pace, if only through the liveliness of the writing.

In contrast, there is surprisingly little discussion of the social and commercial circumstances of publication for a book promising to be as much about “Culture” as “Correction”—apart from Grafton’s delightful account of the social activities of Christopher Plantin’s daughter who, it seems, was easily distracted from delivering proofs back and forth between her father and an impatient corrector across town. However, just as it was possible for the writer Oscar Wilde to think of literary criticism as a form of life writing, and for the painter Lucian Freud to propose that all art is autobiographical, readers should have no difficulty recognizing the ways in which this monograph is as much about its author and his surroundings as an academic as it is about press correction in the Renaissance. Grafton has to the best of my knowledge never worked in a print shop of the kind he describes in detail, nor been a compositor or a press corrector like those he highlights. But he has spent a great deal of time in the academy, writing and co-writing several books and editing and reviewing countless others. The role, reputation, and impact of press correctors in Renaissance Europe, which he details, are all reminiscent of the experience modern scholars know all too well, if only in a different context: we all want reviewers and editors to detect and correct errors in our work, though we still tend to vilify those who

do, and the harder we try to avoid making one error, censoring ourselves, the more we generate another for someone else to censor. Grafton invites just such a comparison between then and now in his opening account of the American novelist Raymond Carver's working relationship with (and debt to) his editor Gordon Lish, though Seth Lerer was more direct in making such connections in his own study of errata in early modern England (2003): "I do not think that I have ever published anything that did not have an error in it," and "I'm not alone" ("Errata: Print, Politics and Poetry in Early Modern England," 41). There is no explicit definition of the culture Grafton attributes to press correction, and perhaps no need for one. A concern for correctness is internalized by any writer who does not want either to make mistakes or to be mistaken in print. Make no mistake: there may be a few minor errors in it, but there is nothing wrong with this book.

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Habert, Mireille.

Montaigne traducteur de la Théologie naturelle. Plaisantes et saintes imaginations.

Études montaignistes 57. Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2010. 323 p. ISBN 978-2-8124-0177-0 (broché) 48,68€.

Issu d'une thèse sur « Le système des gauchissements dans la traduction par Montaigne du *Liber Creaturarum* de Raymond Sebond » (Aix-Marseille, 2002), ce livre se propose de montrer comment, bien informé des questions suscitées par cette *Theologia naturalis* du siècle précédent qui entendait prouver la vérité du christianisme sans s'appuyer sur la Révélation, Montaigne infléchit ou corrige la pensée du théologien catalan dans sa traduction publiée à Paris en 1569, puis, avec ajout de son nom et de ses qualités sur la page de titre, en 1581. Un texte qui, rappelons-le, attend son édition critique et, à tout le moins, son insertion dans les *Œuvres complètes* de la Pléiade (celle de 1962, qui arborait ce titre, ne faisait aucune place à la traduction de Sebond).

L'introduction rappelle ce qu'on attend d'un traducteur au XVI^e siècle et les problèmes spécifiques qui se posent, surtout depuis le concile de Trente,