



Anthony Grafton: A Short Biography to 2015

Citation

Blair, Ann and Nicholas Popper. 2016. "Anthony Grafton: A Short Biography to 2015." In *For the Sake of Learning. Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton*, eds. Ann Blair and Anja-Silvia Goeing. Leiden: Brill.

Published version

<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004263314>

Link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:34391734>

Terms of use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Open Access Policy Articles (OAP), as set forth at

<https://harvardwiki.atlassian.net/wiki/external/NGY5NDE4ZjgzNTc5NDQzMGIzZWZhMGFIOWI2M2EwYTg>

Accessibility

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/digital-accessibility-policy>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#)

Anthony Grafton: A Short Biography to 2015

There is a dragon by the steps leading into Anthony Grafton's Princeton, New Jersey, ranch home. Built by his wife, Louise, who makes stage props, it hovers over the front door with a genial ferocity that suggests less the demand to stand guard than the desire to welcome. Like its wards, this dragon could breathe fire, but it prefers conversation. Next to the dragon is a standing red British mailbox, the first in a series of communication technologies that the dragon invites visitors to inspect, for each has facilitated the owner's lifelong effort to investigate, understand, and circulate valuable knowledge of the past. Inside the house, a book wheel (made to Renaissance specifications for a library exhibit) bears heavy tomes—Latin and Greek dictionaries, and other works open to pages of current interest—while nearby shelves bulge with books and papers, including countless binders of notes, taken in pencil in rare book libraries before the days of laptops, and carefully treated with spray to keep the pencil from smudging beyond legibility over time. Various electronic aids strewn about—laptop, iPhone, iPad—attest to the fact that this historian of early modern European scholarship works not only with the traditional tools of human memory and ink on paper, but also with the digital tools of today.

Backing into the History of Classical Scholarship

At age ten, in sixth grade in the public schools of Ridgefield, Connecticut, Tony Grafton asked his parents if he could learn Greek. As the offspring of Jewish immigrants they did not particularly share this enthusiasm, but they were supportive parents with sufficient means, so they hired a tutor. The extracurricular instruction in Greek continued through the family's move back to New York, where Tony's father, Samuel Grafton (originally Lipshutz), then a freelance writer, had previously been an editor at the *New York Post*. Tony's mother, Edith Kingstone Grafton, was also a magazine writer, who collaborated with Samuel on scripts for live television drama and worked as a publisher in her later years. Tony attended the Trinity School by day and family dinner conversations featuring a

number of New York's liberal Jewish thinkers in the evening—he was exposed early to the model of the public intellectual. He finished high school at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, where he won the Catlin Prize in Classics. Accepted at Columbia University and the University of Chicago, he chose the latter, only to find an undergraduate Classics curriculum that did not easily accommodate a student with strong Greek and Latin who was not yet ready for graduate work. He ventured into the Department of History instead, where Hanna Holborn Gray, who taught him in Chicago's landmark Western Civilization course, and the medievalist Lester Little introduced him to the vast, understudied world of Renaissance Greek and Latin texts. Ever since, Grafton has devoted his career to reinvigorating the study of humanism and classical scholarship by demonstrating their importance to early modern European culture and by bringing to light complexity and vitality in fields and figures in which historians least expected to find them. The experience of college in the late 1960s was also inflected by politics—by demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, in which Grafton took part, and by a massive sit-in at the University of Chicago in 1968–69 and outbreaks of political violence, which left him feeling, as Erasmus had, that he would stick with his liberal church in the university, whatever its faults, until he found a better one.¹

When Grafton graduated with a BA in History in 1971, the academic boom of the 1960s was on the verge of a crash. The Danforth Fellowships—established in 1951 to stimulate the production of PhDs by funding graduate study for one hundred of the nation's best students in all fields—were suspended in 1979, after their endowment had dropped by two-thirds and the academic job market had shriveled. But as the recipient of a Danforth in 1971–75, Grafton was set for graduate school. He chose to stay at Chicago, supervised by Eric Cochrane, an expert on the late Italian Renaissance with a particular focus on historical thought. Those were the days of large graduate classes and massive attrition. Grafton was among some seventy-five admitted in history, and among the fifteen or so to receive a PhD—in his case, just four years later. For his dissertation, Grafton sought to examine the connections between humanism and science, two fields that historians had more often portrayed in hostile opposition. Noel Swerdlow, one of his undergraduate mentors,

¹ See his interview with James Romm in *The Fabulist*, <http://www.aesop.com/usa/the-fabulist/anthony-grafton>.

suggested Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609), a French Huguenot who became one of the most widely respected and highly paid classical scholars of his time. Though his name remained proverbial for learning and brilliance, intellectual historians had rarely studied his technical work. Scaliger has proved a lasting source of inspiration for Grafton, from the publication of his first book in 1983, to the project funded by his 2002 Balzan Prize and 2003 Mellon Distinguished Achievement Award to identify and publish Scaliger's scattered correspondence, which was published in eight volumes in 2012. Grafton's mastery of Scaliger's rich scholarly corpus has also informed many of his thematic books.

Grafton set out to recover what was so exciting about Joseph Scaliger to his contemporaries: why he was considered, with Isaac Casaubon and Justus Lipsius, one of the greatest philologists in Europe's most philologically expert generation, and why he devoted his later life to chronology—the discipline of dating past events from all available sources, biblical and classical, literary and astronomical. Grafton alighted at University College London in summer 1973, for a year of research focused on Scaliger's philology, much of which he spent across the street at the Warburg Institute. Of the many luminaries there at the time (including Frances Yates and D. P. Walker), Arnaldo Momigliano—whose chair was at UCL and whose seminar met at the Warburg—proved the crucial guide. His advice spurred Grafton to recognize that contextualizing Scaliger's contributions required recasting the history of textual criticism. Carlotta Dionisotti, to whom Momigliano referred Grafton, also provided crucial guidance into humanist philology. The third-year graduate student immersed himself in an abundance of primary sources. At the Warburg Library Jill Kraye became a friend, as did Henk Jan de Jonge, who offered essential support to his work in the Scaliger manuscripts in Leiden. Whereas Lorenzo Valla had typically been credited with founding humanist criticism in his unmasking of the Donation of Constantine, Angelo Poliziano emerged in Grafton's account as the crucial figure, who systematized philology by basing it on technical comparisons between Latin and Greek and on a differentiated understanding of the historical contexts of ancient authors.

Instead of following the historiographical consensus among Americans that humanism had developed a deadly sclerosis by the early seventeenth century, or any one of the nationally inflected historiographies he encountered in Europe, Grafton insisted on

building a historical account from first principles. He paid close attention to the citations and claims of the participants themselves rather than relying on historians' truisms, and attended to sources that had often been left aside, notably manuscript notes, collations, and marginal annotations in printed books. By showing how those sources were themselves enmeshed within their authors' intellectual, personal, and institutional circumstances, Grafton created a portrait of classical scholarship in action from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, and generated an expansive model for an intellectual history that encompassed practices alongside ideas. Characteristically, he formulated these innovations as indebted to, rather than in conflict with, the existing historiographies, in a spirit of collaboration among scholars across different times and places.

Though he would later warn his students against doing so, Grafton billed his first book as volume 1 of a two-part set. Volume 2 appeared a decade later, in 1993, larger and more original still, for in it he created the first account of the discipline of chronology in early modern Europe in order to explain Scaliger's contribution to it. This work reflected Grafton's ability to master a wide range of scholarly tools. As with the first volume—and much of his subsequent scholarship—it highlighted his enviable grasp of Latin, not only its classical form but also its early modern iteration, which, given the lack of didactic aids, is acquired principally by extensive reading in original sources. As a result of his voracious reading and near-perfect recall, Grafton can make sense as few can of both the crabbed and the polished imitations of classical Latin, from florid prefaces to acerbic polemics, and he recognizes irony and intertextual allusions as well as effects of style and subtle errors. But *Scaliger*, volume 2, required an additional set of even more recondite skills: mastery of the full range of calendrical and astronomical systems (Babylonian, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Christian, Saxon, and Arabic among them) from which Scaliger, along with many contemporaries, sought to date in one coherent timeline all the events of world history.

Grafton followed Scaliger from his entry into this field with a 1579 edition of Manilius's *Astronomicon*, to his articulation of systematic procedures for critical evaluations, and finally to his own chronological syntheses of 1583 and 1606. After analyzing the extensive controversies these works generated, Grafton concluded that

Scaliger became increasingly aware of the limitations of textual criticism, in the face of competing methods and claims advanced by newly confident astronomers. *Scaliger*, volume 2, is more than a masterwork of exceptionally difficult historical and technical reconstruction. Intellectual historians had tended to locate the significance of the late sixteenth century predominantly in transformations in political and natural philosophy, and even sympathetic historians had frequently reduced the vibrant activities in more arcane provinces of the Republic of Letters to the desultory indulgences of petty squabblers. Grafton, by contrast, demonstrated the central place of chronology on the map of early modern European scholarly concerns, and his work offers a lifeline for all those who venture into this challenging field.

The Renaissance and Beyond: Branching Out

As a student at Chicago, Grafton met Louise Erlich while both were working at the Court, the outdoor Shakespeare Theater in Hyde Park. They were married in 1972. Louise taught at DePaul University while Tony took his first job as an instructor at Cornell before he had finished his dissertation, but they moved together to Princeton in 1975 when Tony was hired as an assistant professor and Louise as a prop maker for the New York Shakespeare Festival. Proud references to Louise's work on countless productions—from the Big Apple Circus in New York, to the Old Vic during a stay in London, to the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, where she works regularly now—and to their children, Sam (born in 1980) and Anna (in 1982), and granddaughter, Alice Mutton (b. 2013), have always featured prominently in Tony's conversation.

Grafton arrived in the History Department at Princeton as an extraordinary cluster of early modern historians was forming. Lawrence Stone, Theodore Rabb, and Robert Darnton were already there; Natalie Zemon Davis came in 1978. Grafton did not share the others' focus at the time on *Annales* school historiography and Geertzian anthropology, but he was known as a wunderkind. He dazzled students with his lectures in Western Civilization and colleagues with talks delivered in his characteristic style—in elegant, elaborate sentences that leave the listener thrilled by the contest between the volume of vivid detail to convey and the need to breathe, which forces the occasional concession of a short pause.

Forgers and Critics (1990) resulted from one such public lecture at Princeton. In it Grafton developed an insight that has proved crucial to subsequent interpretations of the "early modern": that the impulses so often highlighted and valued as modern were also deeply intertwined with other, seemingly contradictory ones. In particular he showed how the rules of textual criticism for which Renaissance scholars were renowned were in fact indebted to practices of forgery and, moreover, how they had been used—even by some of the same people—for making forgeries as well as for debunking them. Grafton steered a nuanced course through the competing shoals of glorifying and demonizing the human figures at the center of his analyses. This work exemplified his affinity for the complexity of the past and his refusal to generalize about a cultural mentality to make it seem either familiar or foreign. Here, as in subsequent work, he emphasized the inextricable connections between seemingly disparate scholarly practices, revealing the interconnections between the forgeries of Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo and Isaac Casaubon's debunking of Hermes Trismegistus. Similarly, in *What Was History?* (2007) Grafton pondered the coexistence of critical acumen and "credulousness" in early modern scholars who, for example, rejected the notion that descendants from Troy settled France but also asserted that "Walloon" had earned their name for asking "où allons-nous?" as they migrated to Flanders. By studying the practices of early modern history writing in conjunction with the *ars historica*, a peculiarly early modern genre offering advice on how to read and write history, Grafton traced the slow demise of history as a prudential search for moral and political advice. A genuine, if sometimes bemused, sympathy pervades Grafton's attention to the foibles and confusions as well as the remarkable intelligence and seriousness of his subjects.

That same sympathetic outlook governs his engagement with other scholars. Grafton's was a voice of calm amid the strident tones of the Culture Wars of the 1990s. He calls for and puts into practice an intellectual irenicism and eclecticism, which values above all solid, innovative research. In recent years he has written eloquently on the significance of scholarship driven not by ulterior motives but by the search for a fuller understanding of often-forgotten corners of the world or of the past. In a 2010 issue of *Perspectives* he pointed out, for example, that "what members of one generation saw as a purely scholarly inquiry into Islam in South Asia turned out to be the next generation's source of

enlightenment on the origins of the Taliban."² His commitment to the value of scholarship that engages broader publics dates from early in his career. From the 1970s Grafton has been writing for the *American Scholar*, the magazine of Phi Beta Kappa. In the mid-1980s he started writing occasional reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement*. His curation of an exhibit at the New York Public Library on "New Worlds, Ancient Texts" in 1992–93 led to a book of the same title (written with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi) that won the 1993 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize in History and brought him to the attention of a wider audience. In subsequent years, he has become a prominent voice in multiple journalistic venues—including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *New York Times*, and the *New Yorker*, but especially the *New Republic*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *London Review of Books*—all of his 116 or so essays becoming research forays into a vast array of topics.

Grafton first developed a public profile in the early 1990s, but his path to wide scholarly celebrity was unintentional and began with a project borne of circumstance and improvisation: his *Die tragischen Ursprünge der deutschen Fußnote* (1995), composed during a year at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin and published in a revised version in English in 1997 (he has, remarkably, multiple publications in German, French, and Italian). On arriving in Berlin for a year of research in 1993—in the days before online library catalogs—Grafton discovered few primary sources relevant to his planned research on Girolamo Cardano's astrology. Instead, after a casual discussion of the history of footnotes elicited enthusiasm from a reporter for the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, Grafton plunged into the Ranke archives at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz and opened the way for the studies of methods of working that have since multiplied, as scholars have mined the historical architecture and structural transformations of their own practices.

His original Berlin project, strengthened by his contact there with Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, returned to the fore during subsequent research stays in Vienna, Jerusalem, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and he published *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* in 1999. Grafton tracked Cardano through the phases of his career from small-time doctor to court physician, university

² "History under Attack," *Perspectives on History* 49, no. 1 (Jan. 2011), 5–7, at 7.

professor, and contentious author, showing how for this versatile multitasker, humanist reading and writing was also shaped by pragmatic concerns. Similarly, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (2000)—developed from a series of lectures Grafton was invited to deliver as the Meyer Shapiro Visiting Professor of Art and Archaeology at Columbia University—surveyed how ancient sources inspired Alberti not only to write in innovative ways about art and technology, but also to become an architect and master builder himself. By focusing on individuals like Cardano and Alberti, Grafton could highlight the interdependence of disciplines too often treated separately by historians—notably the role of humanism in technical fields like medicine or architecture—while offering an integrated analysis of ideas in relation to the practices of reading and writing, observing and inventing.

Grafton attended to manuscript annotations, drafts, and working methods well before interest in the history of the book was widespread. He has been instrumental in the development of that field, both by pioneering these methods of analysis in his own research (for instance, in his 1981 article on student annotations in a sixteenth-century Paris schoolbook or his 2011 *Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe*, based on his 2009 Panizzi Lectures at the British Library) and by shepherding the projects of others into the public eye. Just as he has shown how early modern scholars invested their antiquarian study with contemporary urgency, so too he has explored and reflected on the impact of electronic technologies to facilitate scholarly communication and communion with texts, from his beautifully crafted *Codex in Crisis* (2008) to a session he organized at the American Historical Association on the Google Ngram project.

Grafton has never worked on just one project at a time, but juggles multiple publications in press and in various states of preparation. Currently in production, for example, is a textbook on the history of Western civilization, written with his colleague David Bell; manuscripts in progress include *Faustus and Friends: Magic in Renaissance Germany* and *Past Belief: Visions of Early Christianity in Renaissance and Reformation Europe*, the latter based on the six A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts that he delivered in 2014 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Grafton is also plotting “Colonial Pedants,” a study of learned reading and annotation in the American colonies and the Atlantic world, to center on Adam Winthrop, John Winthrop, John

Winthrop Jr., and Waitstill Winthrop; Richard Mather, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and Samuel Mather; James Logan; and others. The succession of Grafton's publications is astonishing beyond recounting in detail. The current count stands at eighteen major monographs (four of them coauthored), seventeen coedited volumes, and three collections of essays (*Defenders of the Text*, 1991; *Bring Out Your Dead*, 2001; *Worlds Made by Words*, 2009), taken from his 150 scholarly articles and almost as many book reviews and journalistic essays.

Constantly Working with Others

Alongside a solo virtuosity that is hard to match, Grafton has throughout played in duets and ensembles, beginning even from his years as a younger scholar, when historical writing was rarely collaborative. His collaborations with Noel Swerdlow on the history of astronomy and chronology started at Chicago. Those with Lisa Jardine, begun when they were both at Cornell, were carried on mostly through summers spent in London. Their masterfully erudite analysis of the practical implementation of humanist pedagogy, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (1986), caused considerable controversy for portraying humanist education as, among other things, a means by which an elite reproduced itself through the mastery of peculiar forms of Latin style. Some reviews were negative, which attested principally to the novelty of an account that departed from the single-minded lionization of that pedagogical program.

Grafton's involvement in the history of reading owes much to the criticism and advice of Princeton colleagues. In the 1980s, Robert Darnton was working on, among many other subjects, the history of reading. He was skeptical about whether individual experiences of reading could ever be recovered. Grafton, who had worked extensively with marginalia, suggested that these could provide essential evidence. As an example he cited Joseph Scaliger's marginal notes on a printed treatise on papyrus by Melchior Wieland, which he had studied in a 1979 article.³ Darnton argued that these marginalia were too formal and elaborate to represent reading in a recognizable sense. These discussions, which Lisa Jardine joined immediately when she arrived in Princeton for a

³ "Rhetoric, Philology and Egyptomania in the 1570s: J. J. Scaliger's Invective against M. Guilandinus's Papyrus," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 167–94.

stay at the Davis Center in 1988, provided the framework for Jardine and Grafton's study of Gabriel Harvey. They first presented their results at a special meeting of the Davis Center. Darnton immediately pronounced himself convinced, not only of their arguments about Harvey, but also of the larger thesis that formal marginalia could record experiences of reading. His comments—and those of Lawrence Stone, Natalie Zemon Davis, Peter Brown, Rachel Weil, and others—did much to shape the article that resulted. Jardine and Grafton's "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past & Present* (1990), has been widely cited, assigned, and imitated as a model for the study of marginalia in historical context. They showed from Gabriel Harvey's notes in his copy of Livy's histories that Harvey read to extract lessons from the classical past to share with his noble patron, Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester, as he faced the decisions typical of a "man of action" engaged in politics.

With James Zetzel and Glenn Most, both of whom taught Classics at Princeton in the 1980s, Grafton published an annotated translation of the work that started the debate over Homeric authorship (*F. A. Wolf: Prolegomena to Homer*, 1988). Joined by Salvatore Settis, Grafton and Most have recently edited *The Classical Tradition* (2010), a massive reference work bursting with innovative entries and perspectives on the reception and impact down to the present of classical cultures, predominantly of Greece and Rome, with unusual attention to ancient Egypt and the Near East. Glenn Most and Grafton are now finishing an edited volume on the learned practices applied to canonical scriptures in many cultures, a comparative enterprise that is the product of a summer-long workshop at the Max Planck Institute for History of Science in Berlin in 2012.⁴ The resulting collection of essays, *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices: A Global Comparative Approach*, is in production at Cambridge University Press. *Obelisk* (2009), written with Brian Curran, Pamela Long, and Benjamin Weiss, focuses on the long career of one classical icon in European imagination and urban design. Grafton's coeditors and co-authors run the gamut from those more senior than he (Nancy Siraisi, *Natural Particulars*, 2000) to students (Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 2006, and Ann Blair, *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*,

⁴ For some description see <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/wissenschaftsgeschichte-warum-die-moenche-rechtecke-malten/6916166.html>.

1990) and younger scholars (Daniel Rosenberg, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline*, 2010). And in remarkable prefaces to modern editions he has, in some sense, collaborated with his own subjects, like Vico, Cardano, Erasmus, Machiavelli, and predecessors like C.V. Wedgwood, Theodor Mommsen, and Jacob Burckhardt.⁵ Most recently, Grafton joined forces with Joanna Weinberg to produce a beautiful book on Casaubon's annotation and study of Hebrew books, which they pursued in four libraries on two continents over many summers (*"I have always loved the Holy Tongue,"* 2011). He is currently embarked, with his colleague Jenny Rampling and current and former students Richard Calis, Frederic Clark, and Madeline McMahon, on a collaborative study and theatrical presentation of the reading and book-buying practices in the Winthrop family across several generations. These ventures—so often into different areas and contexts from those typically associated with the classical tradition—exemplify his commitment to collaboration in the name of expansive scholarship.

In the Service of Others as Teacher and Mentor

Grafton's willingness to work on an equal footing with collaborators of different ages and ranks reveals his decidedly New World attitude to Old World erudition. Unpretentious and antihierarchical, he is exceptionally generous with his time and attention, particularly with students and younger colleagues. He has mentored countless undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral visitors to Princeton, in addition to scholars he has met from around the world during his travels and longer stays all over Europe. He has stimulated scholars whose pursuits quite often lay at the peripheries of his galaxies of knowledge. In some forty-five dissertations he has supervised or is currently supervising in history at Princeton, Grafton has encouraged students to blend and bridge intellectual history into fruitful new syntheses with subdisciplines such as history of the book, art history, and urban history. Accordingly, his students' works have opened up new avenues of inquiry and spaces of investigation while also invigorating studies of canonical works. Their topics have ranged from the textual practices of Petrarch to the memory of the Renaissance in nineteenth-century Germany, from early modern martyrdom to Enlightenment philosophy, natural philosophy, and antiquarianism, from the circulation of news in early modern

⁵ See the section of the bibliography devoted to these.

Constantinople to the circulation of Moriscos into early modern New Spain, from British engineering to Spanish law. He treats those working on topics within his vast area of expertise—such as students of the historical revolution or of classical studies in the Renaissance—with infinite generosity and blessed patience, enduring draft after draft with equanimity, deftly guiding them to independent revelations without imposing his own certainties. More than one of his advisees has expressed astonishment at how ably he communicates what he has learned from their work, despite their conviction that he already knew what they had discovered. In addition, Grafton has served on vast numbers of dissertation committees: fifty-nine, plus eight in progress, at Princeton and twenty-one at other institutions. Leading by example, he strives to facilitate his students' scholarly autonomy and ability to navigate whatever scholarly challenges they choose for themselves. In recent years, an annual graduate conference that he co-organizes to alternate between Harvard and Princeton has served to enhance the sense of community within and across both programs.

Along with his expansive scholarly interests, this advisory orientation has enabled Grafton to contribute to a broad range of graduate work within and outside Princeton. But it has also infused the whole scope of his pedagogical mission at Princeton, where he has spent nearly all his teaching career, though he has also held appointments as visiting professor at the Collège de France, the Louvre, the Ludwig Maximilian Universität in Munich, the Warburg Haus in Hamburg, and Columbia University, as well as visiting fellowships at Merton and Pembroke Colleges, Oxford, and Christ's and Trinity Colleges, Cambridge. Tenured in 1979, he was Andrew Mellon, then Dodge, Professor of History; since 2000 he has been the Henry Putnam University Professor. He directed successively Princeton's interdepartmental committee on European Cultural Studies (1995–98), the Shelby Cullom Davis Center (1999–2003), and the Center for Collaborative History (2007–12). As Chair of the University's Council of the Humanities, he was instrumental in founding Princeton's Center for the Study of Books in Media in 2002 and the Behrman Undergraduate Society of Fellows in 2009, as well as a new leave program for faculty who agree to contribute during their leave to intellectual life on campus. Grafton promotes the humanities at all levels, from a humanities outreach program for prospective freshmen to the postdoctoral Society of Fellows in the Liberal

Arts. On campus he is known as a talented intellectual impresario who masterminds innovative events open to a general public, and as the author of provocative blogs in the *Daily Princetonian*. He has also been instrumental in implementing institutional changes designed to intensify undergraduate exposure to a liberal arts education, serving as founding director of Princeton's freshman seminar program.

Grafton is a consummate classroom teacher. His lecture courses are enthusiastically received, and he has a deep love of seminar discussions. He views the classroom as a laboratory of new ideas and approaches to learning, and accordingly has encouraged Princeton to expand its undergraduate curriculum. His own teaching choices have been designed to enrich his knowledge of unfamiliar subjects. He has frequently co-taught courses at the both the undergraduate and the graduate level. Because he uses his graduate courses to investigate emergent strains of scholarship, each session is infused with the energy of new discoveries; his graduate seminars are events that enroll eager students from many departments. These courses he supplements with a large dose of graduate reading courses that would be unsustainable to anyone but him; he is especially pleased when the reading lists that students have devised lead him to sources with which he was unfamiliar. Long after other Princeton faculty desisted from the practice, Grafton continued to serve as a teaching assistant for colleagues—even those junior to him—in undergraduate courses well outside his expertise. His commitment to undergraduate teaching has remained unwavering, and only someone with his talent for it could have inspired a former student to lampoon him, tongue in cheek, in the 2004 novel *The Rule of Four* for stealing his students' ideas. As a constant advocate of liberal arts education, he encourages students to take small courses and regularly advises three or four senior theses per year, but he is also a fan of the broad survey. A few years ago he resumed teaching Princeton's Western Civilization lecture course after a hiatus of ten years.

Grafton has chosen his professional commitments carefully to ensure that he is able to play an active role in each. For Phi Beta Kappa, he served as a visiting scholar delivering lectures at colleges around the country, as president of the Princeton chapter, and as a PBK senator. He is still a member of the editorial board of *American Scholar*. As coeditor of the Philadelphia-based *Journal of the History of Ideas* with Ann Moyer, Warren Breckman, and Martin Burke, he is helping this august journal weather the many

changes striking the academic and publishing landscape. He served for ten years as a member of the Board of the American Academy of Rome, and explains that he first became a regular at the AHA to support his students who were giving talks. Before he realized it, he was Vice-President of the Professional Division of the AHA in 2004–7. During those years he helped set up and model best practices for graduate schools, from admissions procedures to posting placement records, and professional protocols for interviewing, hiring, and negotiating. While almost everyone who can avoid the tension-filled environment of the job fair does so, Grafton attended regularly to offer support to job seekers in their most stressful moments. While President of the AHA in 2011, Grafton worked with Executive Director Jim Grossman to destigmatize nonacademic job outcomes for history PhDs, opening up extensive discussions online.⁶ Grafton also played a crucial role in introducing digital humanities into the AHA annual meeting, first through a high-profile session at Boston in 2010 and then more systematically, thanks to Dan Cohen, in the meeting that he chaired as President in Chicago in 2012.

Grafton has received many honors and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship (1989), the International Balzan Prize (2002), and a \$1.5 million Andrew Mellon Foundation Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Humanities (2003), from which he funded, among other scholarly endeavors, a postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton. In 2005 he was the Trevelyan Lecturer at Cambridge, and in 2006 the Camps Lecturer at Stanford and the Tanner Lecturer at Yale; in 2014 he delivered six Andrew W. Mellon Lecturer at the National Gallery. He was elected in 1993 to the American Philosophical Society, in 2000 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2010 to Pour le mérite—an order first founded in the eighteenth century, whose medal features a blue-enameled cross. He has received honorary degrees from Leiden University (2006), Oxford University (2013), and Bard College (2015) and an Honorary Fellowship at Trinity College Cambridge (2015). For every honor and award he has received, he has also helped others achieve recognition, employment, and promotions, parlaying the respect he has earned into gains for others across many areas of

⁶ See for example “No More Plan B,” with James Grossman, *Perspectives on History* 49, no. 7 (Oct. 2011), and *Chronicle of Higher Education* (9 Oct. 2011); “Plan C,” with Jim Grossman, *Perspectives on History* 49, no. 8 (Nov. 2011); and “Time to Craft a Plan C,” with James Grossman, *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1 Nov. 2011).

specialization. His generosity is legendary: not only his students, but also dozens of recent PhDs and colleagues of all generations, have benefited from his advice and support.

[[hold this space]]

Those who know him have often wondered how he does it all and with such good cheer. He admits that he sleeps little and starts the day early, devoting his first hours to writing, following the ancient motto of "no day without a line." His memory is prodigious and his working conditions have been excellent—whether at Princeton, in London or Oxford and Cambridge during the summers, or on research leave in a variety of institutes and libraries. Above all, Tony Grafton has a seemingly insatiable appetite for work, for the study of difficult texts and the teaching and writing about them. But work is the wrong word. He does what he does with a joy undiminished by his accumulated experience—the joy of making new discoveries and new connections and in sharing them with others.

Ann Blair, Harvard University

Nicholas Popper, The College of William and Mary