Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Blair, Ann M. Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information in the Modern Age

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the exercise (image, analysis, application), however, can become tedious. That is not to say that a complete edition of these meditations is not welcome and important, and perhaps the sheer number of meditations demonstrates best the kind of mental discipline practised by Rich, as she analysed the world in particular ways to give it spiritual meaning. But this book may best be savoured in sections, or as a research tool. For example, it may be illuminating to consider clusters of meditations, such as those on autumn leaves (which become meditations on vanity and aging, on prizing the immortal parts of loved ones rather than the cabinets of their bodies, and on how God chooses to allow some leaves to cling longer to trees, that last meditation offering a rare comment about her dead son). Anselment's edition helps us appreciate when Rich is drawing on tradition and when her interpretation is surprising or possibly unique, as in the case, he argues, of several of her meditations on building or maintaining a fire. The flames represent not God's love but instead her yearning for a spiritual fire to be kindled in her own heart, through devotional exercises like meditation, which can then inspire other believers' hearts.

Rich states at several points in her meditations her desire for an audience for her meditations, but only as a means of bringing others to know God. Rich's life writings have received some scholarly attention, but her meditations deserve to be more widely known. Anselment's splendid edition illuminates a popular seventeenth-century spiritual practice and allows a distinctive voice to be heard.

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Blair, Ann M. *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information in the Modern Age.* **New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Pp. xv, 397. ISBN 978-0-300-11251-1 (hardcover) $45**

This is a book you will want to make notes in or copy-and-paste from if you purchase a digital copy, although buyer beware: the original Kindle version of this title does not contain many of the images that help make the print copy such a valuable resource. The full-colour reproduction of Thomas Wijck's *Der Gelehrte* (c.1650) on the dust jacket is alone almost worth the price of the book.

The availability of this title in different formats is fitting given Blair's aim to record the many reading practices and technologies that were developed over the centuries to cope with an increasing flood of available information. Modern technologies such as e-readers promise to ease this burden by enabling readers to search more quickly through books rich in information; however, as the author amply demonstrates, neither the challenges of information overload nor the strategies and technologies designed to overcome it are unique to the present day. Filing, note-taking, sorting, searching, cutting and pasting were all common practices before the so-called information age. As Blair illustrates, focusing on these and other examples, information management is not only culturally specific and motivated but also collaborative and successive. The book itself participates in the history it recounts: it has a title page, table of contents, footnotes, a bibliography and an index to assist the reader, while the digital copy enables the reader to search for individual words and phrases as well as to copy-and-paste without disfiguring a material object. These features are all conducive to what Blair terms "consultation" rather than "intensive" reading; the first she traces throughout the book to the Elder Pliny, who believed "that there is no book so bad that some good cannot be got from it," and the latter to Seneca, who recognized that life is too short for the many books available to be read (*ars longa, vita brevis*).

Too Much to Know is not a monograph in the traditional sense; its chapters do not have to be read from beginning to end in order to make their point. In fact, many of the book's arguments are scholarly commonplaces, like the fact that print did not supersede manuscript culture, while its more unique insights are only stated briefly in passing, like the observation that notes are meant to be forgotten or that the rise in the practice of note-taking coincided with an increased availability of paper in the sixteenth century. *Too Much to Know* does not persuade so much as it gathers and defines. For this reason, it will have a long shelf life as an invaluable resource for scholars, especially historians of reading and the book.

Blair is a compiler of the kind she describes in chapter four, "Compilers, Their Motivations and Methods," which is the central chapter to which the others all refer, sometimes tediously so. She frequently cites authors second-hand ("as quoted by", "see," etc.) rather than primary texts, and in some instances this practice results in the kinds of errors for which earlier compilations were criticized. The most egregious of these occurs when Blair cites Ann Moss on

Guarino da Verona when making the unlikely claim that note taking begin in earnest with Francesco Sacchini in the seventeenth century rather than a hundred years earlier with Erasmus and Vives. There are also times when one begins to wonder whether some of what she presents as trends can really be attributed to the idiosyncrasies of a few individuals. Otherwise, there are fewer faults than one would expect to find in a book of this magnitude. The endnotes can be sparse and the works cited unhelpful, as in the mistaken entry for Thomas [sic] Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* which cites an unfamiliar edition of questionable reliability. Still, errors of this nature are apt to creep into a book of this scope, ranging as it does from Seneca to Samuel Johnson and England to China, and are easy to forgive in light of what the author offers.

In the end, one cannot help but wish that Blair had discussed her own method at greater length, especially given that many of the authors she cites believed the sources of one's achievement should be made public. But there is no question of her great achievement. Blair does not offer a narrative history with which to make sense of information overload over time. Instead, her book stands alongside Montaigne's Essais and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* as a great compendium of learning in which information overload is an all too present reality. *Too Much to Know* is in both formats the very kind of reference device for which its author has documented such clear precedents.

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Delègue, Yves. *Théologie et poésie ou la parole de vérité. La querelle entre Jacques Locher et Jacques Wimpheling (1500–1510)*, Paris : Honoré Champion, 2008. 221 p. ISBN 978-2-7453-1527-4 (relié) 43 €

Bien des querelles philosophiques et théologiques de la Renaissance méritent parfaitement l'oubli où elles sont tombées. Ainsi pour un certain nombre de celles qu'Érasme a déclenchées : on les édite surtout parce que des *Œuvres complètes* doivent mériter leur nom ! En est-il de même pour celle où s'engagèrent, entre 1500 et 1510, Jacques Locher et Jacques Wimpheling ? Yves Delègue a estimé, à juste titre, que ce n'était pas le cas. D'où cette édition qui donne les pièces les plus importantes du dossier (texte latin et traduction française), bien annotées