

THE TWO EDITIONS OF GRAFTON'S *CHRONICLE OF JOHN HARDYNG*

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1542 Henry VIII sent troops to invade Scotland, and issued a proclamation which laid special emphasis on his historical claim to homage from the Scottish crown.¹ The moment was auspicious for the printer Richard Grafton, who had lost his former patron, Thomas Cromwell, and had been imprisoned in 1541 for printing unacceptable works.² Grafton had in his possession a metrical chronicle by the fifteenth-century writer John Hardyng, and he must have felt that it would be a happy stroke to print it at this juncture. Hardyng had himself been employed by Henry V and Henry VI to obtain some of the documents about Anglo-Scots relations on which Henry VIII now relied, and Hardyng's chronicle contained much on this subject, including a passage about the best routes for an invasion. The chronicle went only to 1461, and to give it greater contemporary appeal Grafton prefaced his edition with dedicatory verses to the Duke of Norfolk, the commander of Henry's expedition, and appended a continuation in prose about English history between 1461 and 1509. This continuation represented a publishing scoop, because Grafton ignored well-known chronicles like that of Robert Fabyan (printed in 1516) and went to the best and latest authorities, namely Polydore Vergil, whose Latin *Anglica Historia* had been published in Basle in 1534,³ and Sir Thomas More, whose unfinished *History of King Richard the Third* had been circulating in manuscript copies. Grafton was thus the first to make Vergil's account of recent English history widely available in England, and the first to publish More's famous work, albeit in a version which More's nephew, William Rastell, later castigated as defective and corrupt.⁴ Although Grafton purported to carry his continuation up to "this our time", he added little to Vergil's narrative, which concluded in 1509. Of the two editions of his work, one (STC¹ 12767)⁵ ends with bald references to the accession of Henry VIII and the birth of his son Edward VI in 1536, together with a short encomium on Henry's ecclesiastical reforms. The other (STC¹ 12768), or most extant copies of it, has a long description of the festivities at Henry's first marriage and the birth of his short-lived son by Katharine of Aragon, followed by brief annals, of no great historical or literary merit, which go up to December 1538, and a longer version of the final encomium. The post-1509 material seems to derive chiefly from the *Great Chronicle of London*.⁶

Grafton therefore acted only as compiler and printer of the work, not author, and there is reason to suppose that his first edition was a hasty production to catch the tide of anti-Scottish feeling, and English patriotism, aroused by Henry's expedition in late 1542. There was a second, revised, edition, but the *Chronicle* was then superseded by *The Vnion of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* which Grafton printed in 1548 as executor of his friend Edward Hall, and subsequently by further chronicle histories which Grafton issued on his own account.

Both editions of the *Chronicle of John Hardyng* are dated "January 1543". One (STC 12767) will here be given the informal abbreviation *Ex Off.* because it is described on the title-page as

The chronicle of Jhon Hardyng, from the firste

begynnynng of Englande, unto the reigne of kyng
Edward the fourth wher he made an end of his
chronicle. And from that tyme is added a continuacion
of the storie in prose to this our tyme, now first
imprinted, gathered out of diuerse and sondery
autours . . . Londini, Ex officina Richardi
Graftoni. Mense Ianuarii. M. D. xliii.

The other (STC 12768) will be termed *In Off.* Its title-page runs:

The Chronicle of Jhon Hardyng in metre, from the
first begynnng of Englande . . . And from *that*
tyme is added with a continuacion of the storie
in prose to this our tyme, now first emprinted,
gathered out of diuerse and soundrie autours . . .
Londini. In officina Richardi Graftoni. Mense
Ianuarii. 1543.⁷

This order of entries in STC¹ presumably depends on the fact that *In Off.* is the longer of the two and goes up to 1538. But this is not a safe criterion. As a result of the investigation to be described below, in the new edition of STC the order will be reversed, and the priority of *In Off.* recognised. It is also now possible to put forward a new explanation for Grafton's second term of imprisonment in April 1543.

I first became interested in Grafton's chronicle when I was engaged on a study of the early historians of Richard III, including More, since the versions of More's *History* in the *Chronicle of John Hardyng* and in Hall's *Union* have importance for a textual critic.⁸ Editors of More's work have accepted the old STC order of the two editions of Hardyng, which they term H¹ and H², and R.S. Sylvester accordingly saw in *In Off.* a correction and revision of the More text printed more carelessly in *Ex Off.*⁹ In fact, as I shall show, it is *Ex Off.* that contains the more leisurely recension of the More material. The evidence for this relationship is seen more clearly in the portion of the chronicle that derives from Polydore Vergil, but where More's work is concerned there are a few variants between Grafton's two editions which already point to the priority of *In Off.* Thus at the places equivalent to p.15 l.8 of the Yale edition of More's *History*, where Rastell (1557) and Hall (1548) read "thirsted", *In Off.* has the common metathesis "thristed". *Ex Off.* has "trusted", an error which must depend on the "thristed" of *In Off.* Still more conclusively, at p.13 ll. 16–17 the Yale text has "many a good man shal perish and happely he to, and ye to, ere thys land finde peace again". This, or something like it, was probably the reading in the manuscript used by Grafton and Hall. But *In Off.* renders the last phrase "or it is long, fynd peace again", perhaps because someone working from dictation misheard "or [before] this lond" as "or 'tis long". In *Ex Off.* this mistake is then rationalised into "for it is long to finde peace and quiet again".¹⁰ In other words, the reading in *In Off.* could derive from the original manuscript but not from *Ex Off.*, and *Ex Off.* must again depend on *In Off.*

Since More scholars have found the textual relationships between *In Off.*, *Ex Off.* and Hall's *Union* perplexing, it is surprising that they have not examined the treatment of material from Polydore Vergil in the same works. The situation here is

greatly simplified: the underlying More text can only be reconstructed on a hypothetical basis, but both editions of Grafton's chronicle and Hall's *Union* have a basic dependence on the first, 1534, edition of Vergil's history. It is plain, moreover, that *In Off.* and *Ex Off.* used the same translation from Vergil, but in places this was so inept that Grafton was forced to make drastic revisions for his second edition. The more striking divergencies between the two editions may be described under three heads.

1. In the treatment of proper names, *In Off.* is much closer to its source. Vergil's latinized English names like Bulmerius (Bulmer), Oglus (Ogle), Guido Volstonus (Guy Wolston) appear as Bulmerey, Oglye, Guide Wolstone. Vergil's accusative in "Edmundum Polam" (Edmund de la Pole) produces Edmund Polam. *In Off.* similarly refers to the Marquess Montacute where *Ex Off.* corrects to the English form Montagewe, and *In Off.*'s Rhenate is *Ex Off.*'s René. *In Off.* reproduces such un-English place-names as Atrebatium (Artois), Lutece (Paris), and Maclonium (St Malo).

2. *Ex Off.* very often improves the translation in *In Off.* by substituting a word or phrase which is a better rendering of the Latin. Thus where *In Off.* says that Edward IV treated all men with clemency, *Ex Off.* has "familiaritie" and adds, from Vergil, that this behaviour was more than his estate required.¹¹ In some instances *In Off.* makes nonsense. For Vergil's "perinde quasi ille nos eo honore, non nos eum dignitate auxerimus" (p. 508), *In Off.* has (f. vi) "as thoughe he was not broughte to that dygnitee by vs, and not we by hym". *Ex Off.* gives correctly "as though he was not exalted to that dignitie by vs, but we promoted by him". *In Off.* strangely makes a "Queen Margaret of Spain" instigate the Perkin Warbeck conspiracy in place of the genuine Duchess Margaret of Burgundy in Vergil and *Ex Off.* Two other major blunders in *In Off.* will be adduced later.

3. As well as making such emendations to the translation, *Ex Off.* often contains editorial additions which are not in *In Off.* or Vergil. Very often, but not invariably, such additions are paralleled in Hall's *Union*. These cases raise the strong possibility that Hall had a hand in the preparation of *Ex Off.* For example, when Edward flees to Flanders in 1470, *Ex Off.* and the *Union* both comment on the danger of crossing the Wash, a comment which is not in Vergil or *In Off.*

As an instance of the differing treatments by Hall, *Ex Off.* and *In Off.* at its most inept, one may take their renderings of the following sentence from Vergil (p.507):

Nec abhorret a ueritate Edouardum tentasse, ut
aiunt, nescio quid in domo comitis, quod ab
honestate omnino abesset, cum homo esset, qui
facile puellis oculos adijceret, easque
deperiret.

In Off. (f.v.):

And it is veye true and euident that king
Edward dyd make serche [sic] in his house
for a thing that touched much his honestie,

wher the earle [sic] in dede was a man that
loued women well, and had great fantesie to
their company;

Ex Off. (ff. v–v^b):

And it is not vntrue that the kyng dyd attempt
to do an act in the erles house, whiche was
bothe against the erles honour and honestee:
whether he wolde haue violated the erles niece
or another damosel in the erles house, all men
knewe not, for the kyng was a man that loued
bothe to see and feele a fayre woman;

Hall (sig. A. 6, f.vj^b):

And farther it erreth not from the truthe that
kyng Edward did attempt a thyng once in the
Erles house whiche was muche against the erles
honestie (whether he woulde haue deflowred his
daughter or his nece, the certaintie was not for
both their honors openly knowen) for surely such
a thyng was attempted by kyng Edward, whiche
loued well bothe to loke and to fele fayre dammosels.

Hall, typically, here presents a mixture of exact verbal echoes and free comment of his own. *In Off.* follows Vergil closely but absurdly mistranslates *tentasse* and takes *homo esset* to refer to the Earl of Warwick instead of Edward IV, and *Ex Off.* has parallels with Hall, including the surprising *feel* for *deperiret* (“languished for”).

In view of such differences between the two editions, if one were to maintain the traditional priority of *Ex Off.* it would be necessary to suppose either that in preparing the second edition Grafton deliberately excised his previous elaborations, went back to Vergil’s Latin for proper names, and introduced a number of surprising mistranslations; or, alternatively, that he relied on some earlier and defective draft of his previous edition. Neither hypothesis seems likely. On the supposition, however, that *In Off.* was the revised edition, there is a widespread belief that it was the passage just quoted from *Ex Off.* that put Grafton back in prison in April–May 1543.¹² This belief is quite baseless. The expression “to feele a fayre woman” might be shocking to Victorian prudery but is unlikely to have distressed Henry VIII, even when applied to his grandfather, and Grafton felt quite free to repeat the phrase when he came to print Hall’s *Union*. But there may well be some connection between Grafton’s imprisonment and a different passage in his chronicle, the offending edition being *In Off.* and the cause yet another stupid mistranslation from Polydore Vergil.

The actions of Henry VII after his accession were not relevant to my investigations into the career of Richard III, and it was idle curiosity that led me to notice a further variant between *Ex Off.* and *In Off.*, as noted in the collations to the edition of *In Off.* by Sir Henry Ellis.¹³ Vergil (p. 599) remarks that among other beneficiaries of Henry VII, “Edward, eldest son of Henry Duke of Buckingham, was restored to his

possessions". *Ex Off.* (f. Cviii^b) renders this, unexceptionally, "Edwarde eldest soonne too the duke of Buckyngham, he [Henry VII] restored wholly to all that king Richard had deprived hym of". But the version in *In Off.* proved startling: "[Henry VII] made Edward his eldest sonne duke of Buckingham. . .". Such an ascription of royal birth to Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who had been executed by Henry VIII in 1521 for a much remoter claim to the Tudor throne, would be quite sufficient to put Grafton in prison and destroy the good will which he had hoped to reap from his opportune publication of Hardyng's patriotic work.

According to the Acts of the Privy Council, Grafton was imprisoned from 8 April to at least 4 May 1543, apparently for violating an order against the insertion of "imagined" annotations into licensed publications, an order meant primarily to control the issue of controversial religious matter.¹⁴ At first sight it might appear impossible that his imprisonment was connected with the publication of *Hardyng's Chronicle*, because the title-page date of "January 1543" should mean 1544 new style. But it appears that printers sometimes started their official year on 1 January, not 25 March,¹⁵ and this must have been so in the present case. The title-page of the second part (the continuation) and the conclusion both give the date 34 Henry VIII, i.e. between 24 April 1542 and 23 April 1543. The popular story that Grafton was imprisoned in connection with the chronicle may therefore be true, but has fastened on the wrong sentence in the wrong edition.

Proof of this emerged unexpectedly when in May or June 1972 I went to the Houghton Library of Harvard University to check some of Ellis's readings in the original Grafton editions. I remember that I was getting bored with this rather mechanical job, and was also uneasily aware that the money in my parking meter would soon run out, when I reached my final citation from *In Off.*, the blunder about Edward Duke of Buckingham. I was consequently both disconcerted and annoyed to find that Harvard's copy of the work failed to tally with the version printed by Ellis. The relevant sentence, when located, ran elaborately "... made Edwarde duke of Buckyngham, whiche was the eldest soonne of the late duke of Buckyngham that Rycharde the thirde behedded whose name was Henry, and restored vnto hym all that kyng Rycharde had deprived hym of" (f. Cviii). Further scrutiny revealed that ff. Cvii and Cviii were on paper with horizontal chain lines, unlike the rest of the continuation, and on f. Cvii^b a passage had been edited by the omission of some eleven lines, evidently to make room for the amended sentence about the Duke of Buckingham. At that point I requested some expert advice, complaining that "something seemed to be wrong" with the Harvard copy of *In Off.*, and was introduced to Miss Katharine Pantzer, who showed a gratifying interest in my discovery. Consultation of a microfilm of one of the British Library copies of *In Off.* (B.L. C.30.e.9) showed that Ellis had indeed transcribed his source accurately, but, significantly enough, in that copy of *In Off.* the description of Edward Stafford as eldest son of Henry VII had been cancelled with a pen and a marginal note in a sixteenth-century hand quoted Vergil's Latin original. It was clear that the Houghton Library was the unsuspecting owner of a possibly unique re-issue of the first edition of Grafton's work, in which a section containing a gross mistranslation that amounted to seditious matter had been removed and replaced by a cancel bifolium. In this, Oo iiii (f. Cviii) begins "vnclē" in place of "whiche" in the original. The identification of this second issue

puts it beyond doubt that *In Off.* was the first and *Ex Off.* (which restores the excised matter from f.Cvii^b and gives an accurate rendering of Vergil's reference to Buckingham) the second edition. In view of the schoolboy howlers in translation which marred *In Off.* there is a certain irony in Grafton's later taunting of John Stow for his ignorance of Latin.¹⁶

It is difficult to suggest any more precise date of issue for *Ex Off.* than the broad period between Grafton's imprisonment in April-May 1543, together with his issue of the cancel, and the imprisonment of Norfolk for treason in December 1546. The many emendations and additions in *Ex Off.* suggest a relatively leisurely preparation. Grafton's omission of the annals of Henry VIII from his second edition is best explained on the assumption that he was told, or himself felt it expedient, to delete matter relating to the current reign. Possibly his original licence to print the work had not been intended to cover such material. In any case, the extensive descriptions in the first edition of the royal wedding celebrations in 1509, many wives back, like its odd little anecdote, presumably a jibe against the now-dead Wolsey, and omitted from Hall's *Union*, that Katharine of Aragon, processing along Cornhill, was caught by a sharp shower "a litle passed the signe of the cardinalles hat" (f.Cxlv), may have seemed both dated and tactless by 1543.¹⁷ The Houghton Library copy of the second issue of *In Off.* has a further tantalizing peculiarity. It lacks the last fifteen leaves which in other copies deal with the reign of Henry VIII. Unfortunately it is not possible to tell whether it was issued in that state, because the concluding leaf of Henry VII's reign (f.Cxlv) is also missing, and has been replaced by a modern print in old-style type, which reproduces the matter, but not the spelling or lay-out, of the same leaf in other copies. Proof that Grafton intentionally issued his corrected version of *In Off.* shorn of the annals of Henry VIII, and of the encomium, could be furnished only by the discovery of another copy with cancel bifolium and a conclusion resembling that of the Houghton specimen. The copy of *In Off.* in the Lincoln Cathedral Library is also noted as defective, but the librarian, the Revd D.N. Griffiths, very kindly informed me that this copy lacks all leaves after Oo viii. Folio Cviii begins "whiche", so that this is not another example of the re-issue. I have not, however, attempted to check all recorded copies of STC 12768.¹⁸

Alison Hanham,
Massey University,
Palmerston North.

¹ STC¹ 9179. Also printed in Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancestre & Yorke*. Londini. In officina Richardi Graftoni. M.D. xlvi. References to Hall's work in this paper are taken, however, from the facsimile of the second (1550) edition published by the Scolar Press, 1970.

² Edmund G. Hamann, "The clarification of some obscurities surrounding the imprisonment of Richard Grafton in 1541 and in 1543", *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 52 (1958), 262-82.

³ *Polydori Vergilii Vrbinatis Anglicae Historiae Libri XXVI*. Basileae Anno M.D. XXXIII.

⁴ Rastell's version was printed, from a manuscript in More's own hand, in *The Workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght*... London, at the costes and charges of Iohn Cawod, Iohn Waly and Richarde Tottell, 1557.

⁵ STC¹ = A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave (eds.), *A Short-title Catalogue of Books... 1475-1640* (London, 1926).

⁶ A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (eds.), *The Great Chronicle of London*, (London, 1938).

⁷ The title-page of one Bodleian copy (Ashmole 716) differs in that it omits "mense Ianuarii" from the date, and reads "where Hardyng ended" for "where he made an end".

⁸ Alison Hanham, *Richard III and his Early Historians, 1483-1535* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 198-219.

⁹ Richard S. Sylvester (ed.), *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 2 (New Haven and London, 1963), pp. xx, 273 (etc.). This edition is here referred to as "The Yale Text".

¹⁰ Sylvester here reproduced *Ex Off.* ("H¹") inexactly.

¹¹ f.iii. Page references to Grafton refer to the continuation (the second part of the volume).

¹² e.g. Sylvester, p. 273, "in the second edition, this passage is deleted". See also *A Catalogue of Early English Books forming part of the Library of Robert Hoe* (New York, 1903), vol. 2, p. 318.

¹³ Sir Henry Ellis (ed.), *The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng*, (London, 1812).

¹⁴ Hamann.

¹⁵ More's *Answere to the fyrst parte of the poysened booke* went on sale before Christmas 1533, but was post-dated "1534", as though, said More, it had been printed "since the Feast of the Circumcision". It was therefore taken as an attack on the *Articles devised by the holle consent of the Kynges... Counsayle*. The *Articles* themselves are dated 1533, but in this case old-style dating was employed: they were in fact published in January 1534 new style: Elizabeth Frances Roger (ed.), *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (Princeton, 1947), p. 468.

¹⁶ Ellis, pp. xviii-xix.

¹⁷ The source of this anecdote seems to be the *Great Chronicle of London*.

¹⁸ I wish to express my gratitude to Miss K.F. Pantzer for help with bibliographical questions, and also to Miss Hannah D. French, who kindly allowed me to examine works in the Wellesley College Rare Book Collection.

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