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### Blake, Liza, and Kathryn Vomero Santos, eds. Arthur Golding's A Moral Fabletalk and Other Renaissance Fable Translations

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1550, le visage de la prédestination calviniste. L'exécution de Servet à Genève en 1553 déclenche en effet un des débats les plus célèbres de l'histoire religieuse des temps modernes, par ses répercussions éthiques et civiles sur le droit de persécuter les hérétiques. Le dernier chapitre questionne par ailleurs le concept de Trinité et dévoile les origines du socinianisme en Europe. Doté d'un appareil critique efficace (index, bibliographie, chronologie), même si on aurait apprécié une bibliographie plus développée, ce volume offre une très bonne remise à jour du débat historiographique sur la question. Surtout, il rappelle combien la Réforme radicale a eu un rôle fondamental dans le développement de valeurs telles que la liberté, la tolérance, la dignité individuelle et la sécularisation de l'État et de la société.

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**Blake, Liza, and Kathryn Vomero Santos, eds.**

***Arthur Golding's A Moral Fabletalk and Other Renaissance Fable Translations.***

MHRA Tudor & Stuart Translations 12. Cambridge, UK: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2017. Pp. xvii, 574 + 10 ill. ISBN 978-1-78188-606-9 (hardcover) US\$45.

In the late sixteenth century, Arthur Golding—a prolific Tudor translator best known for his 1567 English verse translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—translated into English (but never printed) a collection of 125 fables based on Arnold Frietag's illustrated Latin book of fables, *Mythologia Ethica*, which Golding retitled *A Morall Fabletalke*. The current MHRA edition of this little-known and rarely-published manuscript not only includes the full text of Golding's version accompanied by corresponding illustrations from Frietag's Latin original, but also contains selections from four other English Renaissance translations: seventeen fables from William Caxton's 1484 translation; extensive prefatory materials but a mere four fables from Richard Smith's 1577 English version of Robert Henryson's Middle Scots *Moral Fabillis*; a dozen fables from a 1617 school-text translated by John Brinsley; and another seventeen fables from John Ogilby's politically motivated 1651 and 1668 translations. Cannily curated

to reflect variances in translation styles and strategies, the fables collected here assume a variety of forms and formats: some are penned in poetry and others in prose; some purport to exemplify Aesop's literary merit, while others have overtly political, religious, or pedagogical aims; some are explicitly linked to Scripture, while others feature succinct or extensive moral explication; some are illustrated with realist, others with anthropomorphic animal imagery; and some are glossed with capacious footnotes, while others supply paratextual interpretation. By situating Golding's manuscript alongside the published fables of some of his contemporaries, the editors aim not only to provide a context for Golding's work but also more generally to expose modern readers to the variety, complexity, and aesthetic allure of Renaissance fable translation.

In their introduction to the volume, Blake and Santos sketch a brief history for the fable—a term translated from the Latin *fabula*, which, for Renaissance thinkers, could connote either fable or myth, both of which constituted narratives employed to encode and convey deep philosophical truths. Paradoxically pointing to both honest invention and deceptive fiction, the term's systematic devaluation over the course of the sixteenth century resonates in the divergence between its signifi- cance in Sidney's 1580 *Defense of Poesy* ("none so simple would say that Aesop lied") and in Bacon's 1620 *New Organon* ("as for fables, they should be completely exterminated"), though Ogilby's reinvention and reanimation of the form in the political and social environment of the English Civil War and its aftermath would see the fable flourishing anew in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Part of the form's power undoubtedly inheres in its ability to teach indirectly through delight, to make philosophical lessons and moral maxims both pleasant to consume and easy to digest, even for children. Humanist schoolmasters, drawn to their appealing blend of pleasure and instruction, regularly employed Aesopian fables in their curricula to facilitate Latin translation, rhetorical training, and moral edification. Perhaps owing in part to the fact that fables featured so prominently in the early educations of premodern English schoolboys, references thereto are ubiquitous in Renaissance literature and drama; as a result, educators lecturing on early modern culture may find themselves tempted to incorporate fables from this collection into their discussions. Critically situating their edition in the tradition of contemporary children's literature scholarship that would view the history of the fable as a history of translation itself, Blake and Santos intend the five translators whose fables they include here to be representative of not

only the diversity of Renaissance fable transmission and reception but also the capaciousness of period translation practices, which range from grammatical construing, to literary expansion, to political projects reflecting contemporary developments. Accordingly, the editors devote to each of the volume's translators introductory commentary on sources, writing, and publication history; a brief analysis of his particular translation style; a discussion of the cultural contexts informing the text's production; and a section of the bibliography for further reading. Moreover, to encourage readers to compare and contrast the translations on display, the editors include in an introductory table cross-referencing notes that allow readers effortlessly to compare multiple translations of a single fable.

While the book's introduction concludes with a brief discussion of the guiding editorial methodology, the first appendix contains a set of extensive textual notes, which meticulously record substantive editorial emendations. The text is further equipped with both a generous bibliography and an admirably extensive index, but its most glaring defect results from the editorial decision to gloss unfamiliar terms in an appendix rather than in the margins or at the bottom of each page. As a result—often several times in a single sentence—the reader is forced to pause, flip to the back of the book, search for an alphabetically-organized editorial gloss to a term, and then return to the main text, only to be taunted by a vast expanse of unused space at the periphery of each page. Minor quibble aside, the collection's extensive black-and-white woodcut and engraving reproductions, which appear on almost every other page, contribute substantially to its aesthetic appeal, while its large format and sturdy construction make it well worth the reasonable purchase price. Overall, this literally fabulous collection will make a welcome addition and substantial contribution to any scholarly library.

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