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**De laudatio van Professor Nicolette Mout en het  
dankwoord van Professor Anthony Grafton,**  
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# **De *Laudatio* van Professor Nicolette Mout en het dankwoord van Professor Anthony Grafton**

uitgesproken bij Professor Graftons erepromotie op 8 februari 2006

*H.J. de Jonge*

Tijdens de academische zitting ter gelegenheid van de 431e dies natalis van de Universiteit Leiden is een eredoctoraat in de letteren verleend aan Anthony Grafton, Professor of History aan Princeton University, New Jersey, USA. Het eredoctoraat werd Grafton verleend wegens zijn grote verdiensten voor de bestudering van geleerdheid en wetenschap in de periode 1450-1800. Tot zijn grote prestaties behoort de omvangrijke intellectuele biografie van Joseph Scaliger in twee delen (Oxford, 1983 en 1993). Maar Grafton heeft ook tal van andere studies op het terrein van de geschiedenis der klassieke filologie geschreven. Daarom is de *FRONS* wellicht een geschikt medium voor de publicatie van de lofrede die de erepromotor, professor M.E.H.N. Mout, bij gelegenheid van de promotie *honoris causa* in de Pieterskerk heeft uitgesproken, en van het dankwoord van professor Grafton zelf. Mevrouw Mout is gewoon hoogleraar algemene geschiedenis en bijzonder hoogleraar in de midden-Europese studiën, speciaal betreffende Oostenrijk, in de Faculteit der Letteren van de Universiteit Leiden. De beide sprekers komt dank toe voor het beschikbaar stellen van hun tekst.

## **De *laudatio* uitgesproken door professor Mout**

"Dear Doctor Grafton,

Fashions come, fashions go, as in life so in scholarship. For us, living in the twenty-first century, it is difficult to understand why some of our scholarly forbears were so fascinated by the science of historical chronology. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, great scholars such as Poliziano and Pico in Italy, Copernicus in Poland, Luther and Kepler in the Holy Roman Empire, racked their brains about problems of dates, both absolute and relative,

and calendar systems in ancient and recent history, for both the Western and the Eastern world. The issue was regarded as all-important, as it meant the establishment of a definitive chronology of history since the Creation of the universe, fitting in the main events of biblical history such as Noah's Flood and the Last Supper, but also the reigns of the ancient Egyptian kings and the central dates of Greek history. It was even hoped that the science of historical chronology would throw light on the future. The French humanist Josephus Justus Scaliger, who in 1593 accepted a honorary research post at Leiden University, became the absolute authority in the field. Here in Leiden he published his impressive collection of writings in many languages, a true treasure of partially reconstructed ancient texts. According to you - I quote - "no other scholar of the period [...] issued such a flood of massive, interminable, magnificently unreadable books, or left so spectacular a legacy."

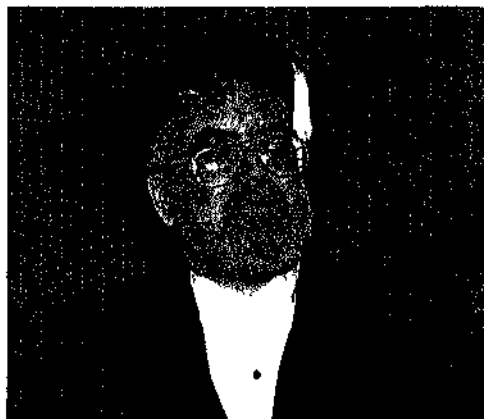
Now one does not normally receive an honorary doctoral degree at Leiden University just for reading difficult books. But maybe you, Professor Grafton, are the exception that proves the rule. For many years you have been studying the practices of learning and of education, immersing yourself in the world of Renaissance culture. You not only had to read the books of the Humanists you were examining, but also the ancient writings they themselves had studied. In this way, you delved deeper and deeper into an almost forgotten past. Historical chronology, a subject of great technical complexity, has no secrets for you. It is part of your investigation of the transmission of culture as a creative process in which change is always charged with meaning. The history of learning and education, of books and readers, directed you to various other aspects of Renaissance culture, in particular the history of science. In those happy days of humanism the examination of scientific subjects and the study of the humanities were still conjoined. The close links between humanist learning and the development of modern science are made clear in many of your books. Your research on Scaliger's philology and his work as an editor of texts was the origin of your very enlightening views on the history of textual interpretation and commentary, including the fascinating history of forgeries, which you present as the criminal sibling of scholarly criticism, and, last but not least, of the footnote.

Your publications have tackled a varied range of topics. From time to time you leave the world of Humanism and the Renaissance to visit later

periods, especially the intricacies of German intellectual history. However, you also succeed in presenting to us a lost world of scholarship that is vibrating with life. In a few moments I shall speak to you and everyone present in Latin. This will not be an empty gesture based on an outdated tradition. Any university, but especially the University of Leiden, which was founded by and for humanists, should not forget that the Latin language is an essential part of a precious heritage. These Latin words, with which I shall now invest you with the honorary doctorate are a resounding witness to a living past which has shaped the present, and the future, of our science and scholarship.

Quoniam vir pereruditus Anthony Thomas Grafton, praestantissimus in inclita universitate Princeroniana historiarum professor, historiam auctorum utriusque linguae inde a litteris renascentibus cultorum inquirens, maximeque quae humanitatis studiorum restitutores ad augendas recentiorum temporum disciplinas attulerunt meditans atque describens, varia et multa contulit ad artium ac scientiarum historiam cognoscendam, hoc nobis persuasum habemus eum de litteris ac historiae scientia optime meruisse.

Statuimus igitur et decrevimus, quadringentesimum tricesimum primum diem natalem academiae nostrae sollemniter celebrantes, eundem vere dignum esse qui a nobis doctor honoris causa creetur, praedicetur, renuntietur.”



*Professor Anthony Grafton op 8 februari 2006 na zijn promotie honoris causa in de Pieterskerk.*

### Het dankwoord van Professor Tony Grafton

Nadat de decaan van de Faculteit der Letteren, professor Geert Booij, de cappa om de schouders van de eredoctor had gelegd, en de erepromotor hem de koker met de bul had overhandigd, sprak professor Grafton het volgende dankwoord. De voetnoten zijn door de samensteller van dit artikel toegevoegd.

“Rector Magnifice, Excellencies, Professor Mout, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the spring of 1974, on the day when I first arrived in Leiden, I went immediately to the old university library on the Rapenburg. A slightly austere-looking librarian<sup>3</sup> asked my business, and I replied that I had come to study the manuscripts of Joseph Scaliger. “Good,” she said, smiling brightly: “you have come to the right place.” She was right—more so than she could have known. In the years since then I have returned to Leiden again and again, and it has always been the right place. Leiden University Library is, of course, the repository of Joseph Scaliger’s papers and the largest single collection of his books—and for more than thirty years the learned and helpful librarians who guard these inexhaustible treasures, which have yielded discovery after discovery, have given me free access to them in the best of working conditions.

But Leiden has given me even more than the chance to study the work of Joseph Scaliger and his friends at first hand. Coming to Leiden, over the years, has given me the chance to explore a late Renaissance city, where the time is still marked by bells, which never seem to be synchronized, and the bridges, canals and squares still have a modest, distinctive beauty. It has allowed me to know, a little bit, at first hand, the life of a Renaissance humanist: especially when, as the library closed for several days over Easter, I spent the time studying in my unheated pension room, my feet in a bureau drawer, like Erasmus. It granted me the chance to make Scaliger’s personal acquaintance, when his bones were disinterred, and to shake the bones of his right hand.<sup>4</sup> It has enabled me to savor the cosmopolitan excellence of a

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Elfriede Hulshoff Pol, beheerder van de studiezaal klassieke letteren.

<sup>4</sup> Op 26 oktober 1979 werd het gebeente van Scaliger uit zijn graf in de Vrouwekerk aan de Haarlemmerstraat geborgen en overgebracht naar het Anatomisch Museum van het Anatomisch-embryologisch Laboratorium aan de Wassenaarseweg. Op 14

European university where philology retains its high place and interdisciplinary scholarship has been pursued for decades, even centuries. And it has given me precious friendships. It is, of course, an extraordinary honor to receive a doctorate from this university, which I have known and admired for so long. But it comes as a special joy to me today that both the orator and my promotor are longtime friends and colleagues in the study of Scaliger's world, and that so many other old friends are here today.

It took Scaliger some years to find the beauty in Leiden's crowded streets and to feel proud when he took part in what he called the "majestas," the "majesty," of the university. This quality first became apparent to him at the great university rituals, such as the defense of theses, where even princes had to uncover their heads in the presence of the faculty.<sup>5</sup> As for me, I fell in love with this city on the first spring day that I spent here so long ago. No words can express the gratitude I feel for being allowed to take part, today, in the celebration of Leiden's majesty.

Thank you.

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februari 1980 bezocht professor Grafton dit museum en was hij in de gelegenheid het gebeente van Scaliger te zien en Scaliger de hand te drukken (althans het in plastic verpakte gebeente daarvan). De berging van Scaligers gebeente was het werk van de anatoom en fysisch antropoloog George Maat.

<sup>5</sup> Grafton maakt hier een toespeling op Scaligers opmerking over de *respondens* of verdediger bij disputaties en promoties, bewaard in de *Secunda Scaligerana*, ed. P. des Maizeaux, Amsterdam 1740, p. 531: '*Est majestatis academiae ut respondens sit in inferiore cathedra et aperto capite, licet sit princeps. Et bene hic fit quod illud observatur.*' ('De waardigheid van een universiteit brengt met zich, dat (bij een disputatie of promotie) de *respondens* of verdediger op het laagste spreekgestoelte staat (onder de *praeses* van de zitting die op het hoogste spreekgestoelte staat), en met ongedekten hoofde, zelfs als deze *respondens* of verdediger een vorst is. En het is hier (in Leiden) een weldaad, dat dit in acht genomen wordt.')



*Professor Tony Grafton schudt Scaliger de hand op 14 februari 1980, Leiden, Anatomisch-embryologisch Laboratorium V r n.l Wim Mulder, conservator, Tony Grafton, George Maat, patholoog-anatoom, nu hoogleraar anatomie en fysische antropologie te Leiden; Henk Jan de Jonge, nu hoogleraar Nieuwe Testament en vroegchristelijke letterkunde te Leiden*