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OBITUARY

Katharine F. Pantzer, 1930–2005

WITH THE *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, as with many reference books in law, medicine, and other disciplines, the names of the original authors stick: Pollard and Redgrave. But if there is a useful shorthand here, which glides past the many others who have contributed, there is also on this occasion one person to whom we owe vastly more than any other. Without Kitzi Pantzer (as she was known in libraries across the world) we would not know anything like as much as we do about the making, publishing, and selling of British books to 1640. No other country can boast such a detailed or full bibliographical record, and her work has shaped much of modern scholarship.

She was born in Indianapolis on 28 October 1930, and her father's collection of work by J. M. W. Turner is still to be seen there; his generosity is further commemorated in the Kurt Pantzer memorial lecture organized annually by the Turner Society in London. After Vassar College she was uncertain of a career, and she tried both publishing and teaching before enrolling for a PhD at Harvard. There she attended the now legendary classes in bibliography given by William A. Jackson, the Houghton Librarian. He spotted her special abilities, and in 1962 she was drawn into the scheme to publish a revised version of Pollard and Redgrave's work of 1926. Much had been done on this by F. S. Ferguson and others, in London, but Harvard could commit space and time, and so the project had moved there.

Then, in 1964, Jackson died at the age of fifty-nine. Most of the second part of the alphabet, I to Z, was in a reasonably advanced typescript; the first part of the alphabet, including the promise of the difficult heading 'Bible', was less developed. Kitzi inherited the task, and the help of two people, Mrs Janet E. Critics and Miss Suellen Mutchow. Working from an office in the basement of the Houghton Library, with photocopies, microfilms, and correspondence piled around her, and with Jackson's annotated (no single word can convey the density or complexity of the marginalia) copy of STC before her, she worked through the pages from 'I smell a rat' to 'Zwingli'. After a canter through 'Indulgences', with the help of David Rogers in Oxford, 'Liturgies' was just the first of many bibliographical mountains. Speed's Genealogies demanded especial ingenuity, and Henry Smith, the minister, required courage as well: one of the very few misprints in STC is a deliberate

one, where she nursed a running head 'Henry Smith, monster' past the proof-readers at Oxford University Press.

Users of *STC* will be wise always to read the headnotes and other miscellaneous information that Kitzi incorporated into her entries. They encapsulate observations made in looking for much more than locations of copies. The list of names printed at the front of the first volume gives some idea of how widely the net of investigative correspondence was thrown, but Kitzi well realized that visits to the major libraries were the best way of making progress. Apart from Houghton, her main focus was on the British (Museum) Library, Bodley, Cambridge University Library, the Folger, and the Huntington. Not only were these the largest collections; at each of them staff time was found for detailed checking that she could then follow up when she came to deal with particularly sticky parts for herself. Her letters were full, often amusing, and always practical; and her occasional line drawings, either in letters or on cards — idiosyncratic comments on the world — were much valued by a fortunate few.

Her annual visits were eagerly anticipated. She required quantities of books beyond even the most demanding of ordinary readers. She brought a sense of fun, and a wicked sense of humour, to her talk, whether about the modern world or the people she met in the course of her travels in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A stationer misbehaving over property might, for example, be described as being caught with his hand in the cookie jar. When she was planning to consult with Geoffrey Elton and his wife Sheila Lambert about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printers, she appeared quite nervous lest her knowledge of politics should prove inadequate. There was no need. She could easily hold her own, and her knowledge of the London book trade was, in many respects, verging on encyclopaedic.

Funding and the practical arrangements for all this were not straightforward. A Guggenheim fellowship helped greatly, and the Bibliographical Society contributed substantially. So did many others in Britain and America, some over several years. There was also the problem of printing. To begin with, the revised *STC* was set and printed by letterpress at Oxford, but this equipment was replaced in the midst of the project. The world was also on the verge of easy and cheap computing, so near that when the index was being contemplated Kitzi and her assistant visited most of the computer stores surrounding Harvard Yard, only to decide in the end that cards and carbon were more reliable; Philip Rider's chronological index was, on the other hand, the product of a computer. *STC* has proved to be the last great national bibliography to be created on the typewriter.

The Society awarded her its gold medal in 1988, and she was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1993. The Bibliographical Society of America made her an Honorary Member. Apart from *STC*, she published all too little, but a good idea of her approach to her work can be

gained from a talk she gave to the Bibliographical Society of America, 'The Serpentine Progress of the STC Revision' (*PBSA*, 62 (1968), 297-311). With the third and final volume of STC published in 1991, many people hoped that she would draw together some of the wealth of knowledge she had accumulated but been unable to include in her richly informative notes to many of the entries. Instead, she turned to an old love, translating modern Greek poets. Knowing that she was dying, in summer 2005 she was taken back at her wish to Indiana, and she died at Columbus on 4 October.

DAVID MCKITTERICK