and not abstract items, there are better avenues for their cataloging.

Others are still more critical: Mary Lynette Larsgaard not only notes that FRBR, as it stands now and until ILS vendors can incorporate FRBR into their software, will not work well for cartographic materials but begins her conclusion by stating "[w]hen FRBR was issued, among the first positive comments that I read were not just by noncatalogers but by nonlibrarians, which made for feelings of caution." Martha Yee, an expert in the cataloging of moving-image materials, discusses not only the potential difficulties in the application of the FRBR model to these materials but also those of the implementation of FRBR and RDA in general: "… we may be left with rules that are useful to no one and purchased by no one." The book does end by noting that everyone concerned must be involved in the process, so that all varying opinions can be heard and considered. Steven C. Shadle, in his closing chapter on serials, notes: "I encourage everyone to get out there and kick the tires in whatever way possible!"

Understanding FRBR is clearly written, well illustrated (many of the concepts are clarified by very helpful diagrams), and well indexed; additionally, chapters feature extensive bibliographies, many of which provide the URLs to the IFLA groups' documents. While it may seem that this book is of interest only to catalogers, the application of FRBR will change the structure of the catalog and the systems used to store and display it; therefore, it is an important text for systems librarians, reference librarians, and anybody else interested in the future of the organization and display of bibliographic information.—*Deborah DeGeorge, University of Michigan.*

William H. Sherman. *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 259p. (ISBN 9780812240436). LC2008-271368.

Long in the making, this timely book, by a young American scholar now at the University of York in the U.K., should be required reading for special collections librarians. Its subject is one that has come to the fore in the history of reading: marginalia. While there have been several shelves' worth of more focused studies on the reading practices of individuals and communities, few have attempted Sherman's mission: to survey the field as a whole. Sherman's principal laboratory was the stacks of the Huntington Library, where he was given direct access to that institution's formidable holdings of STC titles. (Note to colleagues: good things can happen when we bend our access policies.) Since cataloging typically does not disclose with any consistency the presence or absence of marginalia, Sherman had to do so for himself, the old-fashioned way, one book at a time. Needless to add, he handled a lot of books in the course of his project. If nothing else, Sherman's subject is a solid affirmation of the enduring value of the artifacts we steward. Books are more than texts, Sherman reminds us. The artifacts in our stacks are redolent of meaning and evidence that is only discernible through inspection. EEBO and ECCO, take note.

So, what did he find? If Sherman set out to provide a map of a new field of study, what he learned was that there is no map, no grand narrative, no overarching theoretical perch. What he encountered in handling thousands of books were decidedly independent-minded readers responding to texts and using books in personal, opaque, and quirky ways. If we needed more proof that Renaissance readers were not passive slaves to texts, here it is. Sherman's core finding—that about 20 percent of all the STC books he handled contained marginalia—is hard to evaluate in and of itself: is that a lot? a little? But that 20 percent does reveal the extent to which printed books were sites of engagement and activity, sometimes creative, sometime routine. Here we find readers annotating texts, doodling, practicing penmanship, recording recipes and family information, customizing artifacts

to suit their own personal needs. And in the age of "commonplacing," books were troves of quotes to be noted, underscored, and copied into yet other books. The ubiquity of commonplacing, in fact, alerts us to just how practical and basic engagements with books were for the Early Modern reader. Books were not sources of casual pleasure filling long, languid hours; rather, they were practical tools for personal and professional advantage.

If reader markings in Renaissance books offer no larger narrative, they do provide ample terrain for more focused studies. Sherman is at home in the textual microcosm, and some of the best pages in this volume are those devoted to individual books with rich accretions of notes and markings. Drawing on his earlier work on the "magus" John Dee, Sherman guides us through Dee's profusely annotated copy of Ferdinand Columbus's life of his father, Christopher. There we encounter not the vaporous effusions of a mystic but a pragmatic imperialist paying close attention to the ways and means of empire. In his engagements with Columbus, Dee is not so much the prophet of the English empire as he is its engineer. A chapter on the commonplacing practices of the noted jurist and statesman, Sir Julius Caesar [sic], reveals the extraordinary efforts that could go into the construction and compilation of commonplace anthologies whose elaborateness corresponded with the needs of a celebrated public figure. Sometimes the very oddness of the artifact compels Sherman to stray from a strict adherence to his topic, as he looks for ways into the reading practices of the day. Thus, a completely written-out manuscript of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) from the later 16th century prompts the obvious question: why? Why would anyone go to the time and trouble to do this, when printed versions were so readily available? A close inspection of the text reveals an anonymous reader/compiler assembling a unique set of texts under the rubric of the BCP, one that spoke to personal and idiosyncratic devotional needs in a time of doctrinal and liturgical instability.

Some of Sherman's forays into the margins are deliberately tentative and suggestive rather than definitive. "Reading the Matriarchive" encourages scholars to think broadly—in terms of archives—when trying to reconstruct the reading practices of Renaissance women. In particular, Sherman uses recipes, family genealogies, accounts, and penmanship exercises to cumulatively suggest the role of women in the organization of household knowledge. In a similar vein, Sherman's attempt to understand the nature and role of the figured "manicule"—the pointing index finger—in the margins of texts prompts a meditation on the "embodied" nature of reading in the Renaissance. Like his "matriarchive," the wee manicule points to a world much larger than itself.

For librarians, the book's last and longest chapter will probably not come as news. In it, Sherman offers a short history of attitudes to "dirty books," from the efforts of earlier collectors and conservators to rid books of readers' marks—only clean and cleaned books welcome—to contemporary wisdom on the need to protect the historical integrity of artifacts—grubbiness is part of the historical record and should be preserved. Having endured more than a few scholarly seminars in which librarians were excoriated for "fetishizing" The Book, it is good to know that we are now—mostly—fellow travelers. Sherman understands the difference between private and institutional settings, and he only resorts to the "f" word on a couple of occasions.

Studies like Sherman's bear valuable witness to the importance of our special collections and of the need for ongoing and sustained investments in their well-being. They provide the foundations for the new history of the book.—*Michael Ryan, Columbia University.*