

Meditations and Memorials

This, the first segment of the issue, contains the most disparate collection of material. Two of the contributors, Carol Harvey and Gina Heinbockel-Bolik, responded to the invitation to write about a senior scholar influential in the individual decision to become a medievalist. Stephen Steele also looks at a well-known medievalist, with a fascinating glimpse at the way in which Gustave Cohen, *émigré* medievalist in America during the Second World War, appeared in Canada, fostering medieval drama in person and over the radio. Cohen's willingness to bring the study of medieval theatre to the audience of Radio-Canada responds preemptively to John Osborne's thoughtful consideration of the record of medieval studies in Canada. Cohen foresaw Osborne's plea that we all involve the general public in the study of our subject with a workshop or set of lectures, at the very least, each year. Similarly, Andrew Taylor responds to Marc Renaud's public musing that humanities scholars need to find the relevance of their work, and embrace it in terms of its utility to society, and also to get with the program as far as new technology is concerned. Taylor proposes firstly that we move beyond our immediate anguished lament that relevance cannot be quantified and secondly that the relationship between medieval studies and the amelioration of society needs to be measured delicately and with subtlety. He suggests that we turn to our own strengths, and reconsider, for example, why the elegant and well-written *A Distant Mirror* by Barbara Tuchman remains one of the few medieval monographs read as a matter of course by members of the general public.

Dominick Grace, in a submission written for the national snapshot in the next segment but moved because it seems more at home in this group, describes his own practice as a teacher trained as a medievalist but rarely having the explicit opportunity to use his scholarly background in his classroom work. He elucidates the benefits of teaching a wide range of literary texts, and of providing some real breadth of knowledge to students who go out into the world with, at the very least, some sense of the history and complexity of the Middle Ages. I provide my own reflections, both general and specific, on the history of *Florilegium* and its prospects for the future.

Finally, but first in the section, Claire Fanger plangently contemplates the place of the independent scholar in the academy. Her voice, representative of very many others which no longer form part of the continuing discourse of our field, speaks clearly and persuasively to us all.