

Florilegium: Chronica Quondam et Futura

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Jointly edited by Roger Blockley and Douglas Wurtele, the first volume of *Florilegium* appeared in 1979, with the subtitle "Carleton University Annual Papers in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages." The fourteen papers in the volume included a piece on Trotula by Beryl Rowland (later the honorand of volume 6 of the journal, and later still an honorary consulting editor), a consideration by Connie Heatt (now an honorary member of the Canadian Society of Medievalists) of Vincent of Beauvais as a source for the Old Norse *Karlamagnús Saga*, and a piece on the Distichs of Cato and medieval parody by Bruno Roy (later the first plenary speaker at the newly-formed Société canadienne des médiévistes, and the only plenary speaker to date to have served a return engagement for the CSM/SCM). George Rigg was on the Editorial Board, as he has been ever since. A few things, however, have changed. The editors encouraged submissions in English, French, or Latin; today's *Florilegium*, part of a less learned era, can only accept submissions in Canada's two languages. The journal was described as "an annual devoted to the ancient and medieval cultures of Europe, North Africa, and the Near East" and in the preface the editors explicitly encourage "papers which take a cross-cultural or inter-disciplinary approach to history, literature, and other relevant areas of study, which explore the continuities between the ancient and the mediaeval world, and which try to develop new methodologies or adapt those developed by other disciplines." The most recent issue of the journal open to general submissions has the more succinct "an annual publication devoted to studies of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages." Finally, the editors comment on the typing and layout of the journal, indicating their use of an IBM Selectric, which requires the use of unresolved right-hand margins. Today the journal requires the use of Adobe FrameMaker, an array of fonts and special characters, and it rejoices in an idiosyncratic layout which is precisely half the size of an 8½" X 14" page. Like the journal's first iteration, this layout, too, "may offend purists...moreover, it halves the cost of production, an important

consideration in a period of stringency.” Also offending purists, but making it easier to recognise volumes during packaging, is the constantly-changing (but always *not* pastel) colour of the cover.

The editors (A.S. Fotiou joined the original pair for a few issues) recruited their papers from established scholars and especially from those “beginning to make their way in the world of scholarship.” They searched them out and chased them down, as well as accepting papers through general submission. The annual symposia held at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University were fertile ground, but the editors bravely travelled as far as Scarborough for papers from a colloquium on medieval civilisation (volume 6, with Michael Cummings and Michael Gervers as associate editors), and for volume 11 Douglas Wurtele, now the sole editor, captured the medieval papers from the International Association of University Professors of English at its triennial conference at Trent University in 1992. Wurtele’s last volume as editor was 14, for 1995-96, with eleven articles and two review essays. From volumes 9 through 14, the journal moved to MLA style exclusively, to end-notes, and to a new technological process. (Because of the latter process, vols 9-14 are elegantly available on the *Florilegium* website, while earlier volumes require retyping, since scanning is not wholly successful when applied to IBM Selectric productions.) Wurtele’s last five issues also describe the journal as “devoted to cultural studies of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.” With volume 14, the subtitle was shortened to “Papers on Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.”

This brief chronicle must also chart the overlap of *Florilegium* with the new organisation of Canadian medievalists, and the growing closeness between the two entities. Wurtele was the local coordinator for the first-ever conference of the new society, at Carleton in June 1993. He snagged the most central and best classrooms for the new society, and copies of *Florilegium* found their way to the chalkboard ledges in several of those rooms. With volume 14 the marriage of society with journal took place. There had been an engagement and preliminary celebrations: the plenary address of the Calgary Learned’s conference of 1994, Leonard Boyle’s “The Future of the Past” elegantly and insightfully opens volume 13, and three more of the papers (including one by the current president of the CSM/SCM, Carol Harvey) also come from CSM/SCM meetings at the Learned’s. In volume 14, five of the eleven articles had in earlier iterations been papers at the CSM/SCM. *Florilegium* was officially adopted by the society in 1996 at Brock University, with Wurtele as editor. Sadly, some months later he found himself unable to continue because of ill health; Joanne Norman, President

of the CSM/SCM, negotiated valiantly so that at St John's in 1997 *Florilegium* had a new editor. Shortly after that, it had a new look and yet another technological process in its presentation, though the office of the new editor evinced a remarkable resemblance to the office of her predecessor (and still does, with back issues on shelves and in perilous stacks, a small lake's worth of paper, and a furrowed brow or two). Also copied from the previous editor was a certain opportunistic avarice for papers, so that volume 15, in addition to eight papers achieved through the usual channels (a plenary from A.S.G. Edwards, regular submissions, CSM/SCM submissions), also boasted a set of five papers, with introduction, from a conference on the Middle Ages in Contemporary Popular Culture held at McMaster in the spring of 1996. Volumes 16 and 18.1 follow another tradition of the journal, 16 being in honour of Professor Wurtele and including papers from colleagues at Carleton and Ottawa, from former students and friends, from members of the editorial board of *Florilegium*, and also from members of the editorial board of the journal Wurtele edited in his spare time, *English Studies in Canada*. 18.1, in honour of Minnette Gaudet, entails a collection of papers from national and international scholars (including one from Brian Merrilees, one of the plenary speakers on the agenda for the 2003 CSM/SCM conference at the Learned's) in the field of medieval French studies.

The history of *Florilegium* is a chronicle of publishing eleven to fourteen papers each year, sometimes in groups of two to six circulating around one topic, sometimes with review essays focused on specific books but in the last five years with review essays attempting to update and situate the scholarship in a particular corner of the field. Every few years a volume in honour of a retiring senior scholar appears, as is only appropriate. Most commonly, these volumes advance scholarship in the field of the retiring scholar, so that the occasion of the departure becomes also the occasion of new life and renewed thinking in medieval studies. Overlapping with the official adoption of the journal has been an increase in papers submitted for consideration by members of the CSM/SCM, but the journal of course accepts submissions and publishes papers from all over the world.

This issue interrupts the standard pattern briefly with a nationally-focused issue; to do so seems right in this time of very rapid change, both nationally and internationally. Moves are afoot at SSHRC, faculty turnover is very high, curricular change is in the wind, participation rates and population numbers are increasing, professional managers with a business-based notion of performance indicators are gaining the upper hand in Canadian universities, all but a small handful of Canadian

faculty associations are now unionised. The relations among these factors are complex and incomplete; as medievalists we are perhaps naturally conservative, but we will, as before, be caught up in the whirl of change. To some extent, since at individual institutions we are thin on the ground, we have a particular need to stay aware of potential changes and to assess them as beneficial or not, principally for the education of our students in the liberal arts and in critical thinking, and secondarily for the impact of any given change on our research and teaching in medieval studies. Since every medievalist is in some way concerned with the history of education, we are well placed to make those assessments, and to recognise those occasions—no more rare than before though it might so appear—on which the proposed change is a good one.

One of these proposed changes, and one very much on the table today, is an extremely ambitious (for the humanities) proposal to the Canadian Association of Learned Journals by scholars from the association with apparent support in the millions of dollars from several government budgets including SSHRC. The proposal is to take every Canadian journal completely, and perhaps exclusively, online, and to make it available free to anyone with a domain name ending in “.ca”. The benefits to journals with an exclusively Canadian academic readership are obvious, and the instant availability to a national audience will open our work to wider scrutiny and response; however, a journal of medieval studies remains more interested—despite the apparent paradox of this issue and the general good health of medieval studies in Canada—in the lateral connection from medievalist to medievalist around the world. Given the climate of relevance, however, *Florilegium* might risk its SSHRC funding if it does not embrace this initiative. Presumably, in fine Canadian fashion, a compromise will present itself.

A future editor may also want to look at the pricing structure of the journal, which is not standard. Six years ago, I regularised the prices in an effort to make the journal very affordable inside Canada (\$25CAN) and sufficiently affordable outside Canada (\$25US). I included shipping and postage in that cost, and eliminated agency discounts—which agencies awarded themselves and calculated themselves, very much to their own benefit. Agencies, however, consolidate and organise themselves, and recruit libraries such that short of some hours on the internet it is wellnigh impossible to determine what libraries and in which countries the journal is today to be found. One agency, which now orders fifteen copies, has changed the postal address from Niagara Falls, New York, to Niagara Falls, Ontario, thereby saving 40% on the cost of the journal, though perhaps not for the libraries involved. Another has just gone

bankrupt. On a more pleasant note, the journal's circulation also involves exchanges with six or eight other journals, a charming and rather old-fashioned habit and one I hope will continue.

Another, blessedly non-monetary, feature of the journal I hope will continue is the wonderful cover design by Kathryn Finter. Her unflagging support for the CSM/SCM (as a member since the very first year of operations) and for *Florilegium* has gone largely unacknowledged, and almost wholly unpaid. She is both an unparalleled research copyist of medieval and renaissance painting techniques, and an inspired creator of medieval-inspired designs and illuminations. Working with her has been an unmitigated delight.

The *Florilegium* of the future will continue to balance papers from different disciplines, with a range of methodological and theoretical approaches, from scholars of the future and the present, Canadians and not. In this decision-making, in the exceptionally tricky task of finding good reviewers, and especially in the recruitment of good papers, an editor depends on the excellence of the editorial board. I have been very lucky in the members of the board inherited from Douglas Wurtele's tenure, and in the new members elected by the CSM/SCM. I am very grateful to them all, and delighted that they will provide continuity for the journal.

Finally, I would like to enter a plea to every scholar who has published a paper in a refereed journal, and thereafter served on a space committee in your department or faculty, or served on the department or faculty merit assessment committee (whatever its specific term at your institution). Several years ago the Canadian Association of Learned Journals started a project first to determine the level of compensation and help provided for journal editors in Canada, and second—aware in advance of the likely deficiencies—to mount a campaign to improve current practice. Current practice, especially in the humanities, is close to dismal. Douglas Wurtele edited two journals long past his retirement, showing a generosity of spirit that is unlikely to be matched in the future. Faculties and departments need to support their journals, with space, secretarial help, website support, block negotiations with printers to reduce costs of layout and print-runs, distribution networks, and much more. Some Canadian universities provide this level of support for their journals; one that I have seen even publishes a brochure advertising all the local research periodicals. Most, however, do not. The CALJ survey results show that a wide range of compensation for editors also inheres in the system: some have course reductions; for some the work of editing a journal is held to be the equivalent of one published (or as much, rarely, as two)

refereed article in performance assessments; paid research assistants are assigned in some places, not in others. Your editors need your help, partly because the time to mount a campaign to improve the lot of the editor is time the editor needs to spend editing, partly because campaigning on one's own behalf is a long drawn-out process if it is not to run the risk of being characterised as whining, and partly because editors have to choose their local battles, since last-minute requests for reader's reports from colleagues at one's own institution are an everyday feature of the editor's life. The battle is a tricky one, but one that must be joined.

At the same time, an editor's life is one of constant interest and education. Every day brings something to sort out, suss out, solve, or suture. Every week brings something new to learn about, and every month brings a connection to at least one new reviewer or a new contributor. I have been very lucky in the contributors to *Florilegium* over the last six years; they have revised their papers uncomplainingly, accepted my copy-editing and formatting without cavilling, and generally enlivened and improved my life. I am delighted to have served both the journal and the CSM/SCM, and I wish my successor the same joy in the work.

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