

Editorial

McGill University is a rich storehouse for rare, precious and unusual materials which have been collected over a century and a half by generous donors, librarians, archivists, curators, faculty and citizens.

This wealth constitutes a veritable treasure trove of manuscripts, books, archives, artifacts, specimens, artwork, and architecture, spread out over a large and diverse campus.

The tradition of keen and talented individuals collecting within their particular area has existed from the early days of McGill to the present time. Many of these collections are known internationally and have been studied, described, catalogued, and displayed. Others are less well known, and still others are virtually unknown or even undiscovered.

Fontanus, the Latin name for a god of springs and sources, was chosen as the title of this journal. *Fontanus* is a new and major effort to draw attention to, encourage study of, expose and exploit the collections in order to stimulate new discoveries within the University and beyond.

In the libraries, there are collections on Renaissance history and philosophy, Islamic culture, classical archaeology, anthropology and history of science. There is an extensive collection of Indian and Inuit Bibles, books related to renowned philosophers such as David Hume and Søren Kierkegaard and writers such as William Blake, Rudyard Kipling, Rainer Maria Rilke and Stephen Leacock. There are special collections of Babylonian and Assyrian seals, medieval manuscripts, incunabulae and fine books related to the history of printing and illustrations. The collections of older books on zoology, botany and the history of medicine are outstanding, and there are rich collections on 18th and 19th century European architecture, the history of Canadian architecture and Byzantine art.

The archives hold not only the official records of the university but also Sir William Dawson's scientific papers, early records of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning, the papers of the Canadian Philosopher John Clarke Murray, the private papers of F. Cyril James and Maude Abbott, films of old football games, and 15,000 photos from the Canada Cement Company (1910-80).

There are many unique treasures in the Redpath Museum such as geological specimens (including Dawsonite), invertebrate and vertebrate fossils, bird specimens, ethnological collections of artifacts from sub-Saharan Africa, and archaeological collections from the classical world (including 1,000 valuable Greek and Roman coins). The McCord Museum of Canadian History holds fine collections on Canada's native peoples, costumes and textiles, paintings and drawings as well as the Notman Photographic Archives.

Fontanus will be published annually and will contain a number of scholarly articles in English or French based on the collections in our libraries, museums and archives. The subjects will vary widely according to the nature of the documents described and analyzed. The contributors will be librarians, curators, archivists and professors of the McGill community and elsewhere.

Fontanus, as it now appears, represents the combined efforts of many people at McGill. I am particularly grateful for the solid support given from the very beginning to the idea of this new McGill journal by David Johnston, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Samuel O. Freedman, Vice-Principal (Academic) and Dr. Eric Ormsby, Director of Libraries. I am also very gratified by the general support from all sides of the University, notably librarians, professors, archivists and curators.

I owe thanks to the Management Committee of *Fontanus*, under Dr. Freedman's chairmanship, for enthusiastic and very wise counsel, and to the Editorial Committee which provided help and guidance from the first week of the project. I am particularly indebted to my colleague, librarian Irena Murray, who as Associate Editor has overseen both the design of the journal and the technical aspects of its production. I also thank three other librarians Suzy Slavin, Elaine Yarosky and Marc Richard, who as copy editors proved quick, efficient, tireless and very professional. I am grateful to my assistant Terry Kaluta for her cooperative and helpful efforts in word processing.

The McGill Associates deserve special recognition for providing a generous grant towards the production of *Fontanus*, a grant which came forward at a crucial and very early stage of the project.

Finally, I must thank the twelve contributors to this first issue for their faith in the endeavour and their willingness to put work into their articles without which there would be no first volume.

I wish to close by expressing the hope that *Fontanus* will have a very long life. There are certainly hundreds of topics for articles waiting to be written. Such is the richness of the McGill collections.

Hans Möller
Editor