



Some Thoughts on "FONTANUS – From the Collections of McGill University"

by Hans Möller

The Founder and first Editor of FONTANUS discusses the origin of the journal.

Le fondateur et premier rédacteur en chef de FONTANUS parle de l'origine de la revue.

When I came to McGill in 1977, the very rich, and at times unique, collections in the McGill libraries, archives and museums overwhelmed me. Later, when I stepped down from the position of senior library administrator, Drs. Samuel Freedman, David Johnston and Eric Ormsby asked me what I then most wanted to do. One of my answers was to create a journal with articles about the McGill collections, articles to be written by professional librarians and by scholars in various fields.

Although at the time, librarians had only recently obtained academic status, the idea of such a journal was well accepted. "Try it, but it may prove difficult" was the answer. They meant: difficult to pull librarians and professors together in such a creative effort and difficult to obtain enough material to fill each annual issue.

These fears proved groundless: the journal succeeded and ever since Volume I was published in 1988 we have always had sufficient articles and illustrations for each issue. Both librarians and professors contributed articles of scholarly quality and of value to an intellectual audience.

My original idea for a journal such as FONTANUS goes back to my work in the early 1950s at the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Denmark (the Danish National Library) where I was a member of a

team that created an annual journal, just like ours, named FUND OG FORSKNING (Treasures and Research). This journal is still being published today after over 40 years. Its purpose was, and still is, to bring knowledge out of the fabulous collections in that 300-year old library through articles written by librarians and other scholars. I hope FONTANUS annual journal will run at least three hundred years into the future!

Support for FONTANUS grows year by year. It has been described by a noted scholar as "One of the best scholarly journals I know." Chancellor Gretta Chambers and Dean Carman Miller agree that it is unthinkable to have a McGill without FONTANUS. A strong editorial board, with such members as Frances Groen, Director of Libraries, as well as several librarians and professors, has been strong and active support for FONTANUS publications. Dr. Richard Virr has made a remarkable contribution for many years in his role as Associate Editor.

In 1991 it was decided to add a series of monographs under the title FONTANUS MONOGRAPH SERIES. To date, twelve volumes have been published, with the generous support of private donors and foundations. Thus the FONTANUS publications now account for no less than 22 volumes.