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Anne Anninger

numerous, the establishment of four endowed funds—an extraordinary number—being among the ways in which Ms. Garvey's work has been honored. It is also fitting that Ms. Garvey has been recognized outside the immediate Harvard family, Wellesley College awarding her in 1988 its Alumnae Achievement Award. The citation described her as "a foremost authority on the book as an art form," a reputation that Elli Garvey's current project will further enhance. Whereas her generosity with her time slowed down work on a catalog of eighteenth-century Italian book illustration in the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, progress is now rapid, if one can judge by the early hours at which she is glimpsed on paths in the Yard.

Chosen to succeed Ms. Garvey was a former colleague, Anne Anninger. She had been for six years a rare book cataloger for

the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts before joining the Wellesley Library in 1982 as Special Collections Librarian. That is a position in which one teaches. Ms. Anninger also continued her commitment to scholarship, and she is currently finishing a dissertation on "Parisian Book Illustration, 1530-1560" in the Fine Arts Department at Harvard. The author of *Spanish and Portuguese 16th Century Books* (1985), based on the collection in the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, she has also published widely (as well as in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*) on French, Spanish, and Portuguese books and art. The Department's tradition is safe: leadership by a scholar and connoisseur who is able astutely to build the collections while at the same time aiding students and maintaining an active publications program.

Kenneth E. Carpenter

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin* is entirely devoted to the proceedings of a symposium held at Houghton Library on 25 February 1988 in conjunction with an exhibition on "The Bible in the Twelfth Century." The inspiration and initiative for both the symposium and the exhibition came from Houghton's Curator of Manuscripts, Rodney G. Dennis. I had the honor of presiding on that occasion, and I am delighted to introduce the published version of the symposium as well.

The setting for our festivities was a magnificent display of some forty manuscript books and fragments drawn entirely from the Houghton collection and relating in various ways to the preservation and study of the Bible in the twelfth century. In addition to copies of the Old and New Testaments—rare and precious objects at the time—the exhibition illustrated the wide range of texts used in the Middle Ages for the reading and study of scripture: liturgical books such as missals, lectionaries, and books of hours, collections of homilies, and commentaries on individual books of the Bible spanning eight centuries, from Augustine and Jerome to Petrus Comestor and Peter of Poitiers. No other library in this country, and few anywhere, could

have put together from its own resources such a selection of stunningly beautiful and significant books. Their presence at Harvard attests to the generosity of many friends and benefactors; among these it is appropriate to mention in particular the late Philip Hofer, whose gifts to Houghton over forty years included more than half the books in the exhibition. The items for display were expertly chosen and arranged by Houghton's cataloger of Latin manuscripts, Laura Light, who was also responsible for the splendid catalog of the exhibition published simultaneously by the Harvard College Library. The exhibition and the catalog are by-products of an ambitious program to catalog all of Houghton's medieval and renaissance manuscripts according to modern scholarly standards; the first volumes, containing a description of manuscripts with the shelfmark "MS Lat," will soon be ready for the press.

To celebrate the opening of the exhibition three of this country's most distinguished medievalists spoke on aspects of cultural life in the twelfth century; written versions of their papers make up the contents of the current issue. Richard Rouse, Professor of History at the University of California at Los Angeles—and, incidentally, the teacher of Laura Light—made an

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appropriate start by describing the medieval technique and terminology of writing in "Wax Tablets: Learning How to Write in the Middle Ages." (The published text of this paper is the joint product of Richard and Mary Rouse.) Jan Ziolkowski, Professor of Medieval Latin and Comparative Literature at Harvard, discussed an intriguing specimen of twelfth-century literary culture, a Latin poetic anthology from the Houghton collection: "A Bouquet of Wisdom and Invective in Houghton." To conclude, Giles Constable of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton probed the evidence of art as a means of understanding the relation of past and present in medieval thought: "A Living Past: The Historical Environment Created by Medieval Art."

The papers were conceived as independent contributions, but they reinforce and illuminate one another both in detail and in more fundamental ways. Of the themes they share, one that especially interests me as a student of Roman civilization is the continuing presence and vitality of antique culture in the Middle Ages. Mary and Richard Rouse show that the technology of writing and the metaphors associated with it were essentially the same for Beaudri de Bourgeuil as for Catullus and Propertius; Jan Ziolkowski reveals how twelfth-century poets used their intimate knowledge of classical forms and diction to produce original, fully medieval poems; and Giles Constable illustrates, in images as well as words, the pervasive mingling of past and present in the medieval historical imagination.

Quoting the ninth-century writer Walafriid Strabo, Professor Constable speaks of

simple and unlettered people so moved by an image of the Passion that "they show by their tears how the outer and visible forms are impressed like letters on their hearts." ("Impressed," of course, brings us back to *imprimere* and the language of wax tablets discussed by Mary and Richard Rouse.) We may tend at first to understand this remark in the spirit of the more famous statement of Gregory the Great that visual images take the place of reading for the unlearned, but I wonder if we may not also turn it in the opposite direction, to say that letters, for those fortunate enough to understand them, are like visual images in their beauty, their immediacy, and their emotional power. Surely the scribes responsible for the magnificent books in the Houghton exhibition were no mere copyists but true artists, filled with reverence and love for the written word and lavishing on the texts they transcribed the skill and resource of a lifetime.

These twelfth-century manuscripts are in Giles Constable's terms anachronisms and anachronisms, far removed in time and place from their original setting. Their beauty has preserved them and that beauty alone can still delight us, but when they are interpreted with the skill and care of Laura Light, Giles Constable, Mary and Richard Rouse, and Jan Ziolkowski these precious objects become, as it were, living anachronisms, allowing us, at least for a time, to share that quintessentially medieval sense of the past as fully and vitally present.

R. J. Tarrant