

Notes from the Field

Lisa Browar and Marvin J. Taylor

Welcome to the final issue of *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship*. Although our greeting suggests that this is the last appearance of *RBML*, let us reassure you that the demise of this professional journal is the farthest thing from our minds.

Sid Berger's decision to step down as editor of *RBML* after six successful years and our decision to accept stewardship of the publication presented an opportunity to speculate on the journal, its future, and the way it might respond to changes occurring in our profession and in allied fields.

As rare book and manuscript libraries have previously metamorphosed into special collections libraries, so too are special collections libraries changing into cultural heritage repositories before our eyes. Subtle though the distinctions may be, the changes they bring are considerable as we find ourselves with increasing frequency sharing collections, exhibitions, research clientele, and funding sources with museums, archives, and historical societies. The opportunities for new professional conversations are rapidly proliferating. How we cope with emerging technologies, new economic models for collecting, the creation of strategic partnerships, and the ways in which people will experience the authentic are themes that ought to be part of the discussion. We believe these conversations should take place within the pages of this journal.

In preparation for this editorial transition, we have selected a group of provocative conference papers that suggest some of the changes that are planned for the journal. Borrowing from Steve Ferguson's paper included here, the final issue of *RBML* is called "Notes from the Field." It offers some views from our curatorial colleagues that we hope will stimulate thinking about who we are as people interested in rare books, manuscripts, and special collections; what we do; and how we do it. The last article in this issue explains our working plan for *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*, that will premiere next spring, prior to the RBMS Preconference. We hope you are intrigued by the ideas represented in this last issue of *RBML*, and that you remain so in anticipation of *RBM*.

Lisa Browar is the director of Indiana University's Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana; e-mail: lbrowar@indiana.edu. Marvin J. Taylor is the director of the Fales Library at New York University; e-mail: marvin.taylor@nyu.edu.