

## FOREWORD

The initial idea for the present special issue of *CJNS* was to emphasize the visual arts: to discuss architecture and sculpture, painting and drawing, etc. from the two great periods of the Low Countries prior to modern times, namely the Northern Renaissance of the fifteenth century, and the Baroque of the seventeenth century. The issue was to have become the counterpart to the one on the *Fin de Siècle* (Fall 1988/Spring 1989) issue of the *CJNS*, and which was also prepared by the present editors.

To our pleasant surprise, contributions made their way to the Journal from three continents and six different countries. Somewhat counter to expectations their subjects presented a great variety, ranging from a late medieval *Andachtsbild* in the Art Gallery of Ontario, via calculated military exercises in seventeenth-century Holland, to eighteenth-century wine flasks shipwrecked *en route* to Java. These are signs that our Journal is becoming known far and wide, and that the culture of the Low Countries has numerous adepts, and continues to fascinate.

Unfortunately, we did not succeed in obtaining material for the early fifteenth century; instead, the visual arts are concentrated in the period around 1500. At the same time, the time frame had to be expanded to include the eighteenth century. This culturally rich era in the Netherlands is slowly beginning to receive the attention it deserves, as is exemplified by the revealing exhibition in the Mauritshuis in the Hague about "Cornelius Troost (1695-1750) and Eighteenth-Century Theatre" — which ran until June 27 of this year. In addition, this special issue has fine articles on music and literature from earlier periods. These greatly contribute to the enhancement of our perception of the cultural past of the Low Countries. We are also particularly proud of the fact that in this issue all ages of contributors and all stages of the academic career are represented, with articles by graduate students, up-and-coming scholars, established scholars and even professors-emeriti.

As in the case of the *Fin de Siècle* issue, we have in certain cases sacrificed formal uniformity in favour of expediency of publication. For an interdisciplinary journal this is, we feel, a small price to pay for the richness and variety of materials here presented — a variety which bodes well for the future of our common endeavour.

The Editors