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Announcements and Comments

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Announcements and Comments

OVER two decades have passed since Mary Daly's pioneering book, *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968), called attention to Christianity's "record of contradictions" in its treatment of women and heralded the birth of feminist theology. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed an efflorescence of scholarship on women and religion, an expanding body of multidisciplinary investigations of female religious imagery and women's experience of the divine. Those who have written on women and religion since the late 1960s have followed the path described by Peggy McIntosh ("Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-Vision," Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, 1983). They have moved from efforts to find the "missing women" in male-dominated religious traditions to treatments of women as a "problem, anomaly or absence" in religion and on to the more fundamental task of reconceiving religious scholarship in search of a new, inclusive vision. The pattern of development described by McIntosh is not a linear one in which one phase is completed and gives way to the next; rather, it is a spiral-shaped pattern in which all phases remain operative simultaneously on an ever deeper level.

The essays in this issue illustrate the pattern of evolution described by McIntosh. They move beyond supplementing or criticizing traditional male-centered scholarship to suggest new perspectives on the religious experience of women (and men). Either explicitly or implicitly they seek to provide new resources for understanding a broad range of religious traditions, resources rooted in women's experience but pointing toward a more comprehensive vision, what McIntosh calls religion "redefined or reconstructed to include us all" (p. 3). The task of selecting essays for this issue was a difficult one. The attempt to achieve a balanced volume meant that it was impossible to include us all. Many thanks to those who submitted manuscripts, and to Douglas Archibald for his advice on matters large and small.

The front and back covers are illustrations for Ellison Banks Findly's article. The front cover shows "Jahāngīr and Prince Khurram Feasted by Nūr Jahān," Mughal, school of Jahāngīr, 1617. Paper: 25.2 x 14.2 cm (9 15/16" x 5 5/8"). Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., O7.258. The back cover is "Madonna and Child with Angels," Mughal nativity in western style, from an album of

Jahāngīr, early 17th c. Opaque watercolor on paper, 16 9/16" x 10 3/8" including border. Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Gift of John Goelet, 1958.233.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

ELLISON BANKS FINDLY is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Area Studies Programs at Trinity College in Hartford. Author of *From the Courts of India, Indian Miniatures from the Worcester Art Museum* (1981), she is co-editor (with Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad) of *Women, Religion and Social Change* (SUNY Press, 1985). She is in the midst of writing a biography of Nūr Jahān.

MARGARET SUSAN THOMPSON is Associate Professor of History at Syracuse University. Her book, *The Yoke of Grace: American Nuns and Social Change, 1808-1917*, will be published by Oxford University Press.

PAULA S. RICHMAN, Associate Professor of South Asian Religions at Oberlin College, is a former member of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Colby College. She is the author of *Women, Branch Stories, and Religious Rhetoric in a Tamil Buddhist Text* (Syracuse University, 1988) and the co-editor (with Caroline Bynum and Stevan Harrell) of *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols* (Beacon Press, 1986). She is currently working on "Tamil Poetry of God as a Child," an anthology of *pillaittami* translations accompanied by a set of critical essays.

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