



*In Memory of
Albert Rabil, Jr.
1934–2021*

Albert Rabil, Jr., a native of Rocky Mount, passed away peacefully in his sleep January 8th. He was the son of the late Albert and Sophie Rabil.

After graduating from Rocky Mount High School, he continued his studies at Duke University (BA), Union Theological Seminary (BD), and Columbia University (Ph.D.), where he was awarded the Ansley Award for the year's best dissertation, "Merleau-Ponty: Existentialist of the Social World." He was a founding member of SUNY College at Old Westbury and taught there from 1970 until his retirement in 1998. He earned "Best Teacher" status from students despite his challenging courses. At SUNY, he was the youngest professor named Distinguished Teaching Professor. Based in Humanities, he taught across a wide spectrum of disciplines, regularly offering new courses and challenging both himself and his students. His scholarly focus was the Renaissance. Although he never taught a college course on that subject, he directed intense month-long institutes in Renaissance Studies, sponsored by NEH, which attracted educators from nationwide.

Albert had numerous publications, but his most significant contribution was as co-editor, along with his friend of 50 years, Margaret King, of *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*. The series aimed, in Margaret's words, "to recover works by women and by men about women that had been neglected in scholarly discussions of the period 1300–1800." Originally envisioned as a few dozen volumes, the 156th volume of the series arrived January 8, the day of his death. The project may reshape the canon of Modern European literature.

He retired to Chapel Hill, where he kept up his daily 3 mile-jog and was surrounded by three marvelous libraries and most of his dearest relatives. For many years, he presided over the Rabil clan at joyful Thanksgiving gatherings. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Janet, his son

Albert III and wife Tamara, his daughter Alison and her husband David, his sister Carolyn Grant, his brother Jimmy, five grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews, and other special people who consider themselves lucky that Albert was part of their lives.



Remembering My Friend

A tribute by Margaret L. King, excerpted from the Acknowledgments to her 2015 translation of Francesco Barbaro, *The Wealth of Wives: A Fifteenth-Century Marriage Manual*. The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 42.

In my labors over the years, three scholars have been a source of inspiration and assistance: Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–1999), Paul F. Grendler, and Albert Rabil, Jr. At this time, I especially want to acknowledge Al Rabil's importance, as I dedicate to him this volume in the Other Voice series that he and I launched in 1995.

Our association has been long, predating that event by more than twenty years, and it has continued ever since. I shall claim the honor of having first envisioned the Other Voice series, sketching out an initial set of ten or twelve volumes giving voice to the assertion of women's moral and intellectual equality with men. The first volume of the series, Al's translation of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's *Declamation on the Nobility and Preeminence of the Female Sex*, appeared in 1996.

Although the initial plan may have been mine, Al quickly took the ball and ran with it. Over the next twenty years, he developed a huge list of projects in conversations with scholars, most of them women, and many of them participants in a series of NEH-funded summer institutes that he ran in New York City and later, in retirement, in Chapel Hill, NC. The projects kept coming: works in Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Russian, and Polish; in verse and in prose; fiction and non-fiction. Long-forgotten was the original focus on works explicitly addressing the issue of female equality. In Al's mind, any work written by a woman in this period, or by a man on related issues, was ipso facto an assertion of female power.

And so the list grew: beyond the 60 volumes published by the University of Chicago Press, and the 100 or so that migrated to a new Canadian home provided by Iter Inc. and the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at the University of Toronto, and that now is published jointly by Iter Academic Press and the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. In 2015, the 100th volume of the Other Voice series will be published, followed soon after, in 2015 or 2016, by the 50th of the Toronto series. My guess is that the series will close in the early 2020s—best that it come to a graceful conclusion before its time, and ours, is past—having engendered some 150 volumes.

This achievement is not minor, although it is not yet widely recognized. Individual books have been published and positively reviewed; many have received prizes. But there is no apprehension as yet of the collective effect of a mass of work, culminating in some 150 books, concretizing not

only the contribution of women (and their male supporters) to European culture, but the claim of women to intellectual equality and participation in that cultural realm.

Yet in time, I am confident, the Other Voice series will be duly recognized, as one participant in a recent conference noted, as transformational. In Western Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, women participated at an accelerating rate in mainstream culture at a time when that mainstream was itself at a zenith of achievement. They wrote wherever they were: as nuns, as princesses, as housewives, as coerced brides, as widows; they wrote lyric, dramatic and epic verse, pastoral, romance, and satire, history and scientific and medical treatises, and many, many letters that open windows not only on their lives but on the textured fabric of the society they inhabited. And they were joined by a few men—one participant in that same conference called them “fellow travelers”—who without hesitation or restraint acclaimed the intellectual and spiritual capacity of women writers and thinkers. This massive entry of women into mainstream intellectual life is unique in the history of the world. From it all else comes. For those who complain that the composition by women of Petrarchan sonnets, or of accounts of their mystical visions, is irrelevant to the later struggles women waged for social and political power willfully resist the significance of those achievements: those sonnets, those visions, were the first shots fired in a long and continuing battle. The Other Voice series has highlighted more than any other project of our generation the importance of the intellectual activity of women in the early modern era. By the time the last volume is published, it will have changed the way the history of that era is written.

This achievement is due primarily to Al Rabil’s enthusiasm, commitment, material support, and unceasing labor—labor from which he has now decided to rest, as I have taken over the mission of achieving the goal that was once mine, then his, but always ours. To him I dedicate this work that has been at the center of my thoughts as long as I have known him, and that I proudly include in the series that is our mutual endeavor.