

December 16, 2013

Dear Friends:

I'm sure that December finds you as busy as all of us are here in Morton Hall, as work and the holiday season compete mightily for our attention. I'm reminded of the wisdom offered by the Stoic philosopher Seneca to "enjoy the present pleasures so as not to spoil those to come." Easier said than done, perhaps?

As always, we're eager to keep you up to date on the latest news in our Department. I'll stick to my "three-item rule:"

Our Homecoming Reunion for alumni/ae and friends was terrific. We had the largest turnout to date, especially among our younger graduates. It's been great for us to witness this growing support for what we do and we're eager to build on this early success in the years to come. Please take a look at some of the photos from Homecoming 2013 and if you weren't able to make it this year, we hope to see you in 2014. ([add link](#))

As always, our talented and dedicated faculty continues to excel. Two recent examples . . . John Oakley has published a book entitled *The Greek Vase: Art of the Storyteller*. Richly illustrated, this volume presents vases as beautiful vessels of everyday use but also as instruments of storytelling and bearers of meaning. *The Greek Vase* is already attracting wide attention, as attested by a recent review in the New York Times ([add link](#)).

On a different topic, The Cambridge University Press Companion Series has just released *Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, edited by our own Barbetta Spaeth. Consisting of fourteen articles by experts in the field, the book provides a comparative study of religions of the ancient Mediterranean area by presenting current research and exploring the similarities and differences between these religions. *Ancient Mediterranean Religions* is notable for its comparative and interdisciplinary approach and is certain to have a deep impact on our understanding of ancient belief for years to come.

As you can see, the W&M ideal of the teacher-scholar is alive and well in our Department!

Finally, we in the humanities increasingly find ourselves in a world where education is measured in terms of getting a job. As you know, a William & Mary education, especially an education in Classical Studies, has always meant much more than providing job skills (although we do a very good job of that, too!) It's really about equipping young men and women with a life-long passion for learning that will help

them to make a real difference in the world, no matter what profession they might choose.

If you value what we are doing, I hope that you will consider supporting our Department as you plan your end-of-the-year charitable contributions.

With best wishes for the holiday season,

John

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