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## Paragraphoi

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This section publishes short essays exploring topics of interest to the profession. Submissions should run to no more than 1200 words. Diverse opinions and spirited exchanges are welcome. Contributions will be evaluated by the editor, who reserves the right to return those deemed unsuitable for the format.

## Valedictory

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My predecessor, Sander Goldberg, chose to conclude his last volume of *TAPA* with a few reflections on the nature of the editor's mission and the insights into the peer review process he gained while carrying it out.<sup>1</sup> This is a tradition I'm pleased to continue, not least because the ancient convention of the *sphragis*—in the extended sense of an author's retrospective pronouncement upon his or her accomplished task—has long been one of my own scholarly preoccupations.

At the time I assumed responsibility for *TAPA*, I supposed the primary rewards of editorship would be intellectual: opportunities to become acquainted with unfamiliar texts and problems while expanding my grasp of well-known materials. To some extent I was right. Contributors introduced me to subfields of the discipline I scarcely knew, provided fresh perspectives on favorite writers, and even challenged entrenched beliefs. One example of the latter deserves express recognition. In the past I had regularly voiced skittish suspicion of all psychoanalytic criticism, whatever the particular approach—Freudian, Lacanian, or French feminist analysis. During my term of office a number of highly sophisticated Lacanian-oriented manuscripts were submitted to *TAPA*. In the light of the compelling new observations they put forth, I withdraw my reservations and now readily admit that this psychoanalytic methodology is an

<sup>1</sup>S. M. Goldberg, "Valedictory," *TAPA* 125 (1995): 325–26.

methodology is an efficient interpretive tool, especially for understanding the “crisis of masculinity” associated with the collapse of the Roman republic. Whether a Lacanian perspective can illuminate other eras of social transformation and psychic estrangement—late antiquity, for example—I leave to others, perhaps my successors in office, to discover.

I was wrong, however, to assume that the *chief* gratification of editorship would be intellectual. Instead I found that the most rewarding activities associated with the position were creative and, for lack of a more adequate expression, generative. To select just the right referees for a promising submission, to elaborate upon those readers’ good advice, to make editorial suggestions for improving the clarity or effectiveness of the argument—such small instances of intervention gave me a personal stake in the thesis itself and resulted in a great sense of accomplishment when it eventually achieved final form. Meanwhile, collaborating with generous and dedicated referees and warmly appreciative contributors strengthened old friendships and resulted in several new ones. These satisfactions are more than adequate compensation for any time and effort I have invested; they will stay with me for the remainder of my career.

I had hoped to mark the closure of the century and the millennium with a special section in the year 2000 volume dedicated to the impact of the classical tradition on contemporary art, literature, and culture. Certainly that impact is visible and provocative enough: reports of Homer’s death turn out to be greatly exaggerated, insofar as he has just been glimpsed alive and well on Cold Mountain; in a more specialized vein, the dramatic character Benjamin Jowett is presently haranguing innocent theatre-goers about the vicissitudes of the Catullan manuscript tradition and the folly of overlooking the *Oxoniensis*.<sup>2</sup> Plans for a special section were forestalled, however, by the change in publishers, which prompted a decision to include all accepted articles in the present volume rather than carry over a backlog. In its place, then, let the five volumes of *TAPA* produced under my editorship, the final five volumes of the twentieth century, reflect, in their broad range of endeavor—from conventional textual criticism to theoretical hermeneutics—the lively state of classical scholarship at this turning-point in time and thus the continued health of our profession.

*I, puer, atque meo citus haec subscribe libello.*

<sup>2</sup>C. Frazier, *Cold Mountain* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997); T. Stoppard, *The Invention of Love* (New York: Grove Press, 1997) 22–25. Special thanks to Judy Hallett for calling my attention to Stoppard’s wonderful play.