

**JOHN H. D'ARMS AND THE HUMANITIES:
His Achievements, Our Future Course**

Nancy Cantor
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American Council of Learned Societies

ACLS OCCASIONAL PAPER, No. 53

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INTRODUCTION

The ACLS mourns the loss of its president, John H. D'Arms, who died January 22, 2002, after a five-month illness. D'Arms strengthened ACLS immeasurably and multiplied several-fold the support it can provide to the humanities and social sciences. His overwhelming dedication set a very high standard.

John H. D'Arms became President of the ACLS on September 1, 1997. Prior to his appointment at the ACLS, he was, at the University of Michigan, Professor of Classical Studies and Professor of History (1972-1997), Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies (1972-1977; 1980-1985), Dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies (1985-1995), and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (1990-1995). From 1977 to 1980, he was Director of the American Academy in Rome and the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in its School of Classical Studies. His scholarly work focused on the history and archaeology of ancient Rome and the Bay of Naples, especially social, economic, and cultural history. His publications include *Romans on the Bay of Naples* (Harvard, 1970) and *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Harvard, 1981). During his years at ACLS, John was also Adjunct Professor of History and Classics at Columbia University.

Throughout his career, D'Arms served many of the leading organizations in the humanities. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the ACLS, Trustee of the National Humanities Center, Trustee of the Institute for Advanced Study, Trustee *Emeritus* of the American Academy in Rome, and member of the national committee for Mellon Fellowships in the Humanities. President Clinton appointed him to membership on the National Council for the Humanities in 1994, a position from which he resigned upon assuming the ACLS presidency. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1992 and of the

American Philosophical Society in 1998. He held a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1975-1976, when he was a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study. D'Arms received his undergraduate degree from Princeton University in 1956 and spent the next three years at New College, Oxford, as a Keasbey Scholar, receiving, in 1959, a BA degree. He earned his PhD in classical philology from Harvard in 1965.

This volume contains speeches from a panel honoring him at the ACLS Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 2-4, 2002. The speakers were Nancy Cantor, Chancellor of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; W. Robert Connor, Director of the National Humanities Center; Barbara DeConcini, Executive Director of the American Academy of Religion; Patricia Nelson Limerick, Professor of History at the University of Colorado, Boulder; and Neil Rudenstine, President *Emeritus* of Harvard University. As the presentations attest, John D'Arms' vision, his leadership, his intellect, and his good humor were keenly felt. His influence will continue to be significant.

The ACLS is honored to present these speeches in memory of John H. D'Arms to a wider audience.

NANCY CANTOR

Chancellor,

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

The importance of place. In thinking about the remarkable legacy of John D’Arms, I have organized my remarks around the theme of “place,” as a way of considering the contributions of the humanities to our collective understandings of place—its markers and consequences, and the contributions of John D’Arms in solidifying a (proper and prosperous) place for the humanities.

Why place? Partly, of course, I am influenced by our contemporary obsession with place, signified through the public rhetoric of “homeland defense” and the scholarly analysis of human territoriality. Yet, I chose place as an organizing principle also precisely because I believe that John cared deeply about place in all of its senses (celebrating it, sharing it, solidifying it, finding it, recovering it, and imagining it). He sparkled when he celebrated and shared the Rackham Building at Michigan. He reveled in the evocation of place through the detailed analysis of classical rituals, texts, and objects—his scholarly imagination was in that regard distinctly “grounded.” His dreams for graduate education and for the humanistic disciplines revolved around solidifying the infrastructure of support (graduate mentoring, fellowships for newly tenured faculty, records over time about trends in the field) with an eye towards a world in which we would (to borrow from the Academy’s essays) “make the humanities count” (D’Arms 2002). John cared about “place,” and so do we.

Place and people. I should say, as a bit of an aside, that caring about place is not necessarily at the expense of caring about people or participants. (As a personality psychologist, I analyze people by understanding the contexts of their lives, and as a social psychologist,

I study social structures via the form they are given by individuals. Thus, I firmly believe in the intertwining of people and places.) In fact, John D'Arms also understood people, be it in classical times or now, through their rituals of place and the places they inhabited, while he simultaneously worked to enhance the place of the humanities (and of graduate education in the humanities) by positioning their newly-minted or newly-tenured participants in the best position to create a new (and lively) place for humanistic knowing, both in the academy and in the public's imagination.

What about place? Returning, then, to consideration of place, it is useful to focus both on how we “have place” (as in taking one's place; having a rightful place; fitting in one's place) and on how we “do place” (as in exploring place; resisting or rejecting place; transforming or reinventing place). These are complementary and compatible forms of place—that is, having place and doing place, and both John himself and his vision of the humanities embraced both. If we only have place, it tends to become insular, stagnant, and dull (we need the dynamic of reinventing our place on the basis of our explorations); conversely, if we are constantly reinventing, exploring, traveling, without a touchstone of having place, there is little to give meaning to our efforts. In this vein, John worked to give the humanities their rightful place, but he did it in part by supporting the transformative impulses of our fields.

When we think of John, we think of him assuming his “rightful” place (settling in, in his wood-paneled office in Rackham; wearing his tidy suits and personifying the classicist of old), yet we also remember his explorations of place as foreign territory (traversing the diag at Michigan, not to mention the world, and playing with his anything but tidy jazz group). In fact, the first time that I really got to know John was on a committee he chaired at Michigan with the dubious task of setting policy about the awarding of honorary degrees, especially to those who could not be there to receive the honor in person. The committee debated the value of connecting tradition to place, as compared with the power of imagining a connection, when one could not see it up close (with the immediacy of a decision about awarding Nelson Mandela an honorary degree).

At the heart of our dialogue was this tension between our traditions that celebrate place and our willingness to explore. John was maddening in his willingness to champion the value of having place and doing place; and, indeed, we ended our task in a classic place of compromise.

John's vision of the humanities, and their signal contributions to understanding human experience, embodied both a central, one might say classical core (that is, a rightful place) and a transformative mission (that is, of exploration and reinvention). He celebrated the fundamental role of original sources in humanism, but he also embraced what he called "the untidiness of the humanities, their closeness to the patterns and flux of lived experience, and their insusceptibility to anything resembling formal proof" (D'Arms 1999b). Thus, he grounded his vision in sources, often ancient, and yet let it fly in the dynamics and complexity of contemporary daily living.

As Chair of Classics, he supported esoteric classicism via boosting enrollments in the teaching of classical texts in translation. As one of his colleagues, Ludwig Koenen, suggested in describing John's contributions as Chair at Michigan: "it was [he] who moved the department into the necessities of the twentieth century and toward teaching large undergraduate classes using translations (once an anathema) not only because they paid for such exotic and luxury people like me, but also because, even in translation, it is possible to transmit the literary and intellectual values that we owe to the ancients and cultivate in handling the ancient texts and material remnants in art and daily life." In other words, he used the transformative mission to celebrate the rightful place, and vice versa.

As Dean of Rackham, he focused on making training in the disciplines more orderly (using data on time-to-degree, attrition, and placement; and NRC rankings of programs) even as he greatly enhanced the position of interdisciplinary degree programs at Michigan (especially those that brought together different humanities disciplines—Classics and Classical Art and Archaeology; Anthropology and History). As a dean of graduate studies, his focus was as much on the structuring of our fields—that is, on the place in which

students would live as scholars, during and after graduate school—as it was on the graduate students per se. That is, he cared about the life of the field (our place) as much as about the life of the participants.

As President of ACLS, he not only strengthened learned societies by linking them firmly to universities, he also solidified their constituent disciplines by enhancing the place of the newly tenured faculty in these fields. John’s “GI Bill” for these “youngest veterans of the cultural wars” combined signification and transformation in equal parts. That is, he wanted to give them time to go to the “places” that most celebrate and signify the importance of the humanities—the national centers and libraries—at the same time as he placed his hope for the future of the humanities in the transformative thinking that they would do, particularly in exploring foreign intellectual territories and in making common cause with other ways of knowing (D’Arms 1999b).

A place for the humanities. In an opinion piece published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in 1999, John argued for a special place for the humanities as a public good, though one as yet underappreciated both within and outside of the academy. He wrote: “Exploring and seeking to deepen the meaning of life, across civilizations and cultures, is no negligible social good.” Indeed. And as puzzling as is the legacy of inattention to and sometimes disdain for the humanities (as signified by waxing and waning university enrollments or federal support), we can now take some hope, oddly enough, in a renewed public focus on language, culture, and geography (even as it emerges from defensive and potentially divisive motivations); we can also take even greater hope from the renewal of the humanities (post-culture wars) and their positioning both as a voice of insight into the meaning of life across the globe, and in their interconnections with other disciplines. Of course, this hope comes in large part with thanks to the work of ACLS under John’s leadership, as its efforts to bolster a cadre of newly-tenured leaders (with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation), to build a data infrastructure (as part of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences project and with the National Endowment for the Humanities), and to solidify

connections between the humanities disciplines, professional organizations, and centers and institutes (in alliances with university leadership) have so well positioned humanistic endeavors front and center inside and outside of our campuses. In pondering this new-found hope, I want to end with a few thoughts on what forms this special place for the humanities in their reflection on human experience might take.

A place apart. Ironically, just as humanistic endeavors become more and more needed in the interpretation and betterment of the human condition, so does it become ever more important to their authenticity and ultimate utility that they reside in “a place apart,” and thus are able, as my colleague Dick Wheeler wrote of the emergence into prominence of Elizabethan theater, to celebrate or to criticize, or both, the institutions of normal society. For example, humanists have an enormous contribution to make to the education of future leaders of business, science, and government, by showing them how to be “playful” in their imaginings about the human condition. John pondered this same question in a speech he gave at Emory (2001): “But just how comprehensive, corporate, and commercial can universities afford to become without losing their valuably critical stance, at what Cavafy has called ‘a slight angle to the universe?’” Just as our places can become insular and stagnant if we don’t open them to reimaginings, so too can we lose the playfulness of our reflections on humanity if we are too responsible, too anchored in what others often call “the real world.”

A place connected. As playful as we might be, there is responsibility to be reckoned with as well, and so the humanities must stay connected—within their own sphere to other disciplines; across diverse ways of knowing; and, most especially, to that real world of lived problems. There is a need to be connected in these ways, partly to address the vexing problems of the human condition, but also to refresh our own understandings. John spoke about just these sources of generational renewal in the humanities several years ago, when he returned for a visit to Michigan to speak at the ceremony recognizing the awardees of the John H. D’Arms Faculty Awards for Distinguished Graduate Mentoring in the Humanities (2000). He said:

First-rate scholars, positioned at all points in the academic career cycle, need to shift the contemporary humanities dialogue beyond the self-referential to deeper understanding across departments and disciplines; more, we hope, will express impatience with the excessively specialized vocabularies and overly rigid disciplinary structures that have held the humanities back. Will we probe the interconnections and interdependencies with other fields that are needed in order to address increasingly urgent social problems?—for neither science nor the humanities, operating alone, can possibly deepen understanding in the many places where our natural and social worlds converge. Can we be more successful in connecting the findings of scholarship to a wider educated public?

In other words, can the humanities find a place connected?

Enhancing the place of the humanities in John's honor. I think that the answer is more clearly affirmative than it has ever been—in fact, the humanities can find a place connected and still preserve their playful and rightful place apart, in part by strengthening the national infrastructure for the humanities and in part by positioning key players as change agents and spokespersons within those habitats. John tried to do precisely this by using his perch at ACLS to broker alliances between foundations, learned societies, university leaders, and national centers and libraries; he also did it by putting his faith in the generational change agents of our fields—that is, in graduate students first, and then later in newly-tenured faculty. In other words, he worked both on places and with people; or, more specifically, on the relationship between the structuring of places in which to think and the supporting of the right participants to think boldly about those places—our fields. And, here is why he was hopeful and we should be too—here is what he reports from a participant in one of ACLS's Conversations with newly-tenured faculty in the humanities:

I feel that my generation of scholars has benefited from the best of the old and new—in-depth canonical instruction, historical and archival research, and interdisciplinary training. . . . It meant a great deal to all of us when you referred to us as “scholars in the prime of [our] intellectual lives.” I know that I will continue to face challenges—fighting for time and finding time in which to get work done—but I feel more entitled, somehow, to my expectations and my hopes. (D’Arms 2000)

We too feel more entitled to our expectations and our hopes, and John had a great deal to do with our optimism—it is only so sad that he could not have had more time to see the rightful place of the humanities both celebrated and transformed by his efforts on their behalf.

BARBARA DECONCINI

Executive Director,

American Academy of Religion

I confess to feeling somewhat akin to the speaker in Theodore Roethke's poem *Elegy for Jane* in which he remembers a student of his who has died in an accident. He is deeply moved by her loss, but at the same time he recognizes that he stands at some considerable distance from her and her life. He is discomfited by this gap. "I," he says at the poem's end, "I, with no rights in this matter." When Steve Wheatley invited me to participate on this panel, I was both honored and somewhat hesitant. For, unlike our other speakers, I knew John D'Arms only briefly and not well. I was not of his circle. I got to know him in 1997 when I was serving on the Board as the elected representative of my colleagues in the Conference of Administrative Officers of the constituent societies at the time John joined the Council as its President.

What is more, I remember with some dis-ease the ACLS Annual Meeting in 1997 here in this hotel, when John, having recently been named President-Elect, joined the CAO toward the end of one of our sessions and stayed afterwards with part of the group for some informal conversation about his vision and priorities for ACLS. The session did not go particularly well, and, as chair of the group, I felt particularly bad about that. As well I should! I have since heard the encounter compared to "a firing squad focused on a target." Notwithstanding this, let me report that at the time of his death, John enjoyed not only the respect but also the great affection of the members of the CAO.

As I later mused on that rocky start, I came to think that the underlying difficulty had a lot to do with our respective roles. Here

was John, seasoned university administrator, former ACLS Board member, distinguished public advocate for the humanities, and newly appointed CEO of the Council. Surely his call for a return to focusing on the Council's core mission, with its centerpiece of a reinvigorated fellowship program, was not only exactly on target but also extraordinarily appealing to humanities scholars. But the problem was that he was not talking to humanities scholars so much as to persons in positions functionally similar to his own. Which is not to say—I hasten to add—that there aren't scholars—and notable ones at that—among the CAO. But, qua CAO, we were ourselves a group of chief executive officers, running, if you will, our own small companies, some of them in fact not so small, some, in fact, larger (in terms of annual budgets and the like) than the ACLS itself. What is more, as those with executive and fiduciary responsibility for them, we likely identified ourselves with our own societies in a closer way than members of the Board and delegates do. Notwithstanding the formal governance structure of ACLS, we executive officers of the constituent societies tended to understand our societies *as* the American Council of Learned Societies. And we got the impression that John did not, or did not sufficiently, appreciate this sense of the ACLS as fundamentally a federation of scholarly societies.

So, one aspect of the frisson of that initial encounter had perhaps to do with an inadequate consciousness, on both sides, of relative understandings of the Council, rooted in relative authority positions and, even, positioning. But another, more fundamental one had, I think, to do with the peculiar character of the ACLS itself. Founded by a group of 12 learned societies in 1919, societies which themselves had been around by then for decades or even a century or more, over time the ACLS became more than the sum of its constituent parts. This duality is exemplified in the current mission statement. ACLS's mission is "the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences *and* the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies."

As things developed and as became abundantly clear in the months and years that followed that somewhat testy overture, John really did

want the second part of the mission to be integrated with, not separated from, the first. Indeed, John wanted the strengthening of relations among the societies to be *about* the advancement of humanistic studies. And he understood, certainly better than many provosts and presidents, the scholarly societies' value within the ecology of American higher education. Look at the ways in which he fostered links, and I mention here simply some representative examples:

- Arranging substantive humanities events on campuses for the CAO in conjunction with our fall meetings;
- Visiting the Board of Directors of almost half of the 64 constituent societies;
- Championing our desire to give serious, focused attention to the mission and roles of learned societies in the twenty-first century—a desire accomplished with his help in our recent [2001] Boise retreat;
- Reading and absorbing our publications such that the presentations he made at various conferences and symposia are replete with concrete and specific references to various of our programs and initiatives;
- Nurturing strong relationships between learned societies and the research universities that host many of them.

John's leadership in the ACLS was, as it unfolded, all about *integration*, about gathering and marshalling the diverse communities' resources in support of what he understood to be, in his words, the "noble purpose" of the ACLS. It is worth summarizing here, for the record, some of his prodigious accomplishments in his too-short tenure at ACLS:

- Increasing the fellowship endowment by two-thirds and on the way to doubling it;
- Tripling the amount awarded in stipends in the core fellowship program;
- Establishing two special prize fellowships: the Burkhardt program for recently-tenured scholars and the Ryskamp program for advanced assistant professors;

- Sparking two major new ventures: the humanities program in the former Soviet Union and the History E-Book Project.

John's extraordinary success in crafting innovative core programs and developing foundation support for them was rooted in collaborative processes of imagining. For John, it seems to me, the examined life was the life of colloquy and conversation. He immediately restructured ACLS Board meetings into a "committee of the whole" to foster common discussion of a few key issues every time, dispensing with routine through an assent agenda. He did something comparable with this Annual Meeting, emphasizing bringing the various groups, constituencies, and publics of the ACLS together for mutual reflection on important issues. He sought out and welcomed back ACLS Fellows and former Fellows; he built strong links and garnered strong support from the universities. ACLS is in all ways a larger and more capacious community because of John D'Arms.

Early in his tenure, with support from the Kellogg Foundation, John hosted a handful of Conversations at the ACLS offices with the aim of helping to define ACLS's course under his leadership. As he wrote, "These meetings, which we hope will be wide-ranging but focused conversations among diverse constituencies, will be critical in leading to an enhanced sense of institutional identity and purpose at ACLS." Each was a mix of Board members, delegates, society executives, university administrators, directors of humanities centers, and distinguished scholars, some 20 or 25 every time, crowded around that conference table, chewing over a few core questions framed under the rubrics of ACLS as funder, convenor, advocate, and collaborator. Later he did something comparable with groups of many of the most promising recently tenured professors from across the nation.

Though hardly gregarious and perhaps even shy, John was remarkably conversational—and this way of being-in-the-world both grounded and nurtured everything he was able to do for us and with us. It strikes me that his very leadership was inherently conversational. Now, anyone who knew John knows that he wasn't

“laid back,” that he was a man of clear opinions and well-formed ideas. That he was exacting and could be demanding. It was precisely because he was a person of strong views, often forcefully expressed, that he thrived on conversations. In the happy phrasing of one of his close colleagues, “while his mind was often made up, it was never closed. He respected, indeed elicited, strong counter-argument. He would gnaw on opposing points of view, but often altered his own in the process. To him, ideas developed in isolation were rarely splendid.”

As a way of keeping faith with John’s classicism, I consulted the *OED* for the etymology of the English words “conversation” and “converse.” The Latin verb *conversare* means literally “to turn oneself about, to and fro.” In its substantive form, *conversationem* is characterized as a noun of action. Conversation—no less than conversion, which shares the same root—is about doing something; it involves transformation or turning oneself around! In its earliest English usage, conversation means the action of living or having one’s being among persons, as in “Where is his conversation but in the empire of heaven?” Conversing means dwelling somewhere, as in “How many years art thou old and where conversest thou?” Indeed, the transfer of sense from “to keep company with” to “to talk with” is quite recent in English, appearing only in the sixteenth century.

I find this etymology of conversation, with its historical mix of dwelling, talking, turning around, and acting, a remarkable fit with John. When I asked one of my colleagues in the CAO to characterize John’s contribution to ACLS, she responded, “He started with a point of view about what was going on, but he listened, and he was open to the tremendous mix of viewpoints and intellectual interests among the societies. You know,” she said, “he was *there*.” Surely it is not coincidental that John and his wife Teresa made their home in Manhattan just blocks from the ACLS offices.

What comes through in the various addresses John gave as ACLS President is his bedrock caring for the humanities, as he says, in all their “untidiness . . . their closeness to the patterns and flux of lived experience” (D’Arms 1999b). Well versed in the contemporary

discourses and apparently irreconcilable ideological differences within and among our fields, he persists in a conviction that the humanities can be *humanizing discourses*. He holds to a vision of the academic humanist as one who engages “in exploring with students fundamental questions concerning human life and its meaning.” His hope for a new generation of humanists, as he writes in the *Chronicle*, is that they forge a way beyond culture wars toward reconciliation, mapping a fresh common ground that weds the old and the new values. “Who will be both patient and bold enough,” he asks, “to attempt to recapture a sense of the whole in the humanities?”

John could say and mean such things simply and without irony. At the same time, he knew the sheer slog of so much of our work and the pressing need to build the sound infrastructure essential to its flourishing. It is this capacity for mixing idealism with pragmatism, seasoned by just the right touch of wit, that Evelyn Waugh missed on first making John’s acquaintance: “He is not superficially very American. . . . [He] dresses somberly, parts his hair, and speaks in low tones. But he has the basic earnestness of his compatriots which I should find unendurable.”

It is not these words of his famous father-in-law, however, that seem to me to capture John’s spirit best, but rather those of another great British novelist: “Only connect,” writes E. M. Forster, “only connect.”

ACLS is *both* a federation of polyglot societies *and* our world’s premier advocate for the humanities and social sciences. Robust, imaginative, capacious, and conversational, John D’Arms’ presidency was, in the best sense, about going back to basics.

In an essay written just before he was named President of the ACLS (D’Arms 1997), John already left us our marching orders. If the life of learning is to continue to flourish, he cautions, then “more of us in the academic humanities will [have to], in Seamus Heaney’s words, ‘make the Orphic effort to haul life back up the slope against all odds.’”

W. ROBERT CONNOR

Director,

National Humanities Center

I first met John D'Arms over coffee on a second floor cafe on Broad Street in Oxford when we were both students. That must have been in 1957 and was the first of many cups of coffee, glasses of wine, meals, meetings, conference calls, and conspiracies over the years. Since that time in Oxford we were rarely in the same place for very long, but our courses kept intersecting. He did his PhD in Roman studies at Harvard while I did mine in Greek things at his alma mater, Princeton, but we were both classicists, and often met at professional meetings. I started teaching at Michigan but left for Princeton just before he joined the faculty there. When John served as a Trustee of Princeton, he used to visit us at home, often carrying a bottle of wine, and we would chat. We talked a lot, by phone and at meetings, especially after I moved to the National Humanities Center (where he was once again a Trustee—and a very good one!), and even more so when he became President of the ACLS. We were co-workers on many humanities matters, and friendly rivals on others.

And so life went on, as if forever. Then last September I phoned him just to catch up. He told me everything had gone wonderfully in Rome; he had made good progress on what I called his “decadence” book, the project he described as “Food and Drink in Roman Society.” Rome had been wonderful, except that he had had a fall and hurt his hip. “Oh John,” I said, detecting a worried tone in his voice, “I stumble all the time; it was probably just too much tennis the day before.” No, it was something more serious. He was having some tests done. And then, it seems just an instant later, he was gone.

Ours had been a friendship of inadvertence, something that had grown up over the years without either of us thinking about it very

much. I had no idea how close we had become or how much I would miss him.

Many of his accomplishments are well known to this group. But I have to say something about him as a scholar, because scholar he was, at the core and to the last. When he came to New York he continued his teaching and research while carrying on his demanding work at the ACLS. When I telephoned him at ACLS, I was often told that he was at his office at Columbia, and when I reached him there we often talked first about his teaching and scholarly projects. I know how much discipline such devotion to scholarship requires, and I finished those conversations feeling stimulated by his ideas but humbled as I compared my own meager efforts to his.

Scholarship was not something he did to please the chair of his department, to win a raise from a grudging dean, or for the glory of it. It was in his bones to keep on learning and keep on sharing what he learned with his students. I cannot do better in summing up his achievement as a classical scholar than to quote another Roma historian, Corey Brennan:

Early on his innovative contributions to the history and archaeology of the Roman Bay of Naples—which impressively illustrated the possibilities of the emerging field of ancient “regional” studies—won for him an international reputation and a broad network of contacts in Italy. That reputation was further solidified in the early eighties by major publications on the social dimensions of Roman commerce. One research interest that seems particularly prescient is his work (starting in the mid-eighties) on the history of the Roman communal meal, for there John D’Arms’ contributions have sparked no end of subsequent inquiry.

His scholarly productivity, I might add, continued right to the end, and included the editing of hitherto unpublished Roman inscriptions, work demanding a high level of technical skill, and more wide-ranging interpretive studies such as his essay “Performing

Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful” in a volume published entitled *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (1999a). Here one can see very clearly the persistent transdisciplinarity of his work, his mastery of the disciplines of archaeology and epigraphy, and his ability to relate them to literature, social history, and the history of art.

One can also see a broadening of the range of methods he utilized and his willingness to relate the drives and desires of the Roman elite to the experience of the ordinary people who witnessed the spectacles of their processions and elaborately staged dining. Examine the extensive footnotes and you will see the rich roster of those with whom John broke bread in this intellectual banquet. Next to Tacitus and Petronius, and the emperors, senators, and nouveaux riches they wrote about, are the architects and decorators of Roman buildings; the grand figures of Renaissance Italy are there, along with a King of France; nearby he brought in a generation of younger Roman social historians, whose work John knew and valued. Not far away you’ll find the anthropologist Jack Goody, always good at sniffing out cooking, class, and cuisine; Erving Goffman, chatting about strategic interactions; and Barbara Freedman, with an eagle eye for staging the gaze: John read them all and assimilated with great acumen their insights, as he did the knowledge of more traditional scholars. We can see in this and his other recent articles what important new work he was producing on social class, the ideology of equality, and the Roman love of spectacle; they provide good reason to think that, had he lived longer, his scholarship would have risen to even higher levels of excellence. But be that as it may, the publications on his c.v. (four books, dozens of articles, uncounted reviews) are—well, what word can I use except “spectacular”?

Such scholarly contributions came from the core of John’s intellectual life, but they are not the core of his contribution to our shared enterprise. He knew more clearly than almost anyone else how underdeveloped and vulnerable was the infrastructure of the humanities. As Dean and Vice Provost at the University of Michigan he had come to see how the great national laboratories, scientific professional societies and national academies, the National Science

Foundation, and the support of universities, foundations and governmental agencies worked together to sustain a scientific enterprise of unrivaled excellence. He admired and respected this achievement, as we all should. But the humanities, by contrast, had a much narrower institutional base, and that base was poorly supported and often in danger of fragmentation. The most pressing problem in the humanities, however, was not the weakness of the infrastructure per se, but its consequence, the diminution of intellectual ambition at a time when humanists needed once again a voice that “resonated with confidence, as they engaged in exploring fundamental questions concerning human life and its meaning,” as John phrased it in an essay in the volume *What’s Happened to the Humanities?* These questions could not be left to the scientists and the economists any more than the scientific breakthroughs of recent years could be shrugged off and ignored by humanists. Humanists need to engage with the big questions; they should not be shy of intellectual ambitions.

Ambition was not a bad word in John’s vocabulary. The Burkhardt Fellowships were aimed precisely at stimulating and sustaining the intellectual ambitions of newly tenured faculty members, the next generation of leadership in the humanities. Much of John’s work, indeed, can be seen as a succession of efforts to help humanistic scholars realize their highest intellectual ambitions.

When John came to the ACLS in 1997 the wounds from the protracted culture wars were deep; the intellectual divides within our professions were destroying old friendships and fragmenting departments. The media had little to say about the humanities except to mock the titles of papers presented at the MLA and to denounce the excesses of political correctness. Congress had come close to abolishing the National Endowment for the Humanities, and with a few exceptions, notably the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, foundations were in headlong flight not only from the humanities but from research of any sort that did not fit into their immediate social agenda.

John knew what he was getting in for. He had just completed an essay called “Funding Trends in the Academic Humanities, 1970-

1995” for *What’s Happened to the Humanities?* While fashionable critics were busy denouncing positivism and rejecting empiricism of any form, John set out to gather and analyze the data that showed a major change in support for scholarship during the past generation, the decline in federal funding, and the transfer of the burden of support to colleges and universities that accompanied what he called “the virtual disappearance of large foundations as patrons” of the humanities. (He loved to use old-fashioned words such as “patrons” and “patronage”; while the rest of us were babbling about “funding sources,” he would drop the name of Maecenas.)

The impact of these changes in patronage was especially evident, John pointed out, in the fellowship support provided by the ACLS, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Humanities Center. This was, he noted, the lifeblood of scholarly research in the humanities. But the flow of this lifeblood had come perilously close to stagnating. Fellowship numbers were declining and stipend levels were stuck below \$30,000, gradually eroding as faculty salaries increased and inflation took its toll. The infrastructure of the humanities, to judge from this crucial leading indicator, was being undermined.

Others will describe in more detail what John accomplished at the ACLS. Let me simply note how easy it would have been in 1997 to sit back and complain about the foundations and what Congress had done to the NEH. But that was not John’s way. He did not complain. He rolled up his sleeves and got to work with all the grace, charm, and other wonderful qualities he had.

Now, since John would insist that I speak in Tacitean mode, *sine ira et studio*, let me not pretend that he was without flaw or blemish. I must mention the principal failings as well as his many virtues.

He was not beyond prevarication. I remember him arriving at our home in Princeton with a gift bottle of wine which he explained with a perfectly straight face and convincing manner he had received gratis from the special wine cellar in an under-basement of Nassau Hall reserved for the use of Trustees. I almost believed him, since that would explain some otherwise puzzling decisions emanating from that august body. He was also a terrible tease. He loved embarrassing

stories about his friends. When he went down to the University of Florida a few months after I had visited there, he ferreted out some damaging details about a kayak trip I had done while there. When I next spoke to John, he twisted the knife mercilessly and gleefully until I succeeded in changing the topic of conversation. This unfortunate tendency to tease was from time to time combined with another bad habit, calling people by their childhood nicknames. He often called me “Bobby,” a name that no one else has applied to me, at least in my presence, for over 50 years. He used that habit to good advantage, I must confess, creating the feeling that we were boyhood chums off on a lark, having fun in what otherwise might seem a bleak situation.

How did Johnny accomplish so much? The years after his move to ACLS were a dazzling series of successes. Since the National Humanities Center had a major capital campaign under way at exactly the same time, I know how difficult fund raising in the humanities was—and still is. But John moved with grace and assurance, and immense persuasiveness, through the once chilly corridors of foundation power, scoring one success after another, each with many digits in it. He succeeded precisely where his analysis of funding trends had shown the going was toughest—the major foundations.

John saw one other point with great clarity. If new support for the humanities was to be found, the beneficiaries of that scholarship had to step up to the plate. Who were the beneficiaries? In the first instance, the recipients of ACLS fellowships. He was not shy about reminding us that these fellowships had made a difference in our lives—and our incomes. And he put the question squarely to us: *If humanistic scholars will not support humanistic scholarship, then how can we ask anyone else for help?* So we stopped complaining about our alleged impoverishment and started writing checks, and maybe even revising our wills. That’s the way the infrastructure of the humanities will be strengthened, through private sources, led by us humanists ourselves.

But John’s willingness to look with clear eyes at the data also led to another important conclusion. Trace the dollars that support

humanistic scholarship and one sees that the primary “patrons” of humanistic scholarship were no longer foundations or federal agencies but colleges and universities themselves and, ultimately, the parents who paid tuitions and the alumni who contributed to them. That was as it should be. The mission of these institutions was, after all, the advancement of learning, and they were also the primary beneficiaries of the new knowledge and fresh interpretations that humanistic scholarship generates. Since that was the case, it was incumbent upon them to support the humanities both on their own campuses and nationally.

John then set out to increase the annual contributions of colleges and universities to the ACLS; and when he succeeded, quickly and brilliantly, he set his sights higher and developed an ingenious scheme whereby over the next decades universities would *endow* fellowships at the ACLS. His rapid success was against all the odds. I know that better than anyone. A few years earlier I had tried a similar appeal and, as Neil Rudenstine will remember, failed ignominiously. John got college and university leaders to focus not on cosmic questions—*Whither the humanities?*—or on the heated rhetoric of the culture wars, or on epistemological angst, or on changing the perception of the humanities in the media, but on getting the lifeblood of the humanities flowing again—fellowship support for scholarship of uncompromising excellence. He knew that if we sought first the invigoration of scholarship, all these other things would be added unto us. And it worked. Soon colleges and universities were joining individuals and foundations, *all* pitching in, with the confidence that John conveyed so effectively that this was the job that *had* to be done and that it *could* be done if we each did our part. His work has been an example and an inspiration to the rest of us. Over the past few years the number of fellowships and the stipend level have gone up dramatically, not only at the ACLS but at the National Humanities Center and in other settings as well. He strengthened the infrastructure of the humanities more than any other single individual. But that was not his greatest gift to us. It was to inspire intellectual ambition by developing an infrastructure strong enough to sustain it.

So we know some of the answers to the question. How did John do it? He set the right priorities, he focused on excellence, he had the determination and the ability to build momentum. But somehow that doesn't quite do it. There's something else, something that does not readily show up on a list of publications, or in the recitation of awards and honors, or positions held. It's something that doesn't often get rewarded when we think about salaries or promotions, and that all too often eludes search committees when they look for institutional leadership. Thinking back to the time when John was simultaneously Director and Mellon Professor at the American Academy in Rome, Corey Brennan wrote of his "apparent effortless and a slightly offbeat elegance" and his gift of "charisma." I prefer the word "grace." But perhaps humbler analogies are better. Maybe he had the academic equivalent of the gardener's green thumb, the touch that makes things flourish. Or I find I sometimes think of John when I cross a little stream near our house. You have to cross on some very wobbly stepping stones. Don't try testing each stone as you go. Just keep your eye on the far side of the stream and move swiftly without ever admitting the thought that you might fall in. John moved like that.

Well, whatever it was, we need his qualities, need them badly *now*, just at this moment when we feel his loss most intensely. This is a moment of opportunity for the humanities, a time when many people are looking for academic humanists to help them better understand this strange, often violent world we find ourselves in, or at least to provide some perspective and consolation. We need his ability to use new methods to preserve and extend our understanding of the past, not least the Greek and Roman classics which John knew so well, and at the same time be open to the vast richness of experience that we have so often and so foolishly overlooked. A tall order? But now we have some allies. Our friends at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, following John's good example, have a new humanities initiative and a project to gather the data that will let us better understand the situation of the humanities and speak more precisely about it. The Association of American Universities has a task force at work on ways to strengthen the humanities on their

campuses and beyond. The climate in some of the major foundations is less chilly, thanks in no small part to John's diplomacy. Perhaps that will prove true on Capitol Hill as well. New centers for the humanities continue to emerge on college campuses and at the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, Radcliffe, and elsewhere. So yes, John was right. There is reason to be "cautiously optimistic"—if we are willing, as John once said, quoting Seamus Heaney, to "make the Orphic effort to haul life back up the slope against all the odds" (D'Arms 1997). If there is ever a time for the reinvigoration of the humanities, this is it, not least because John's own efforts have made it possible for us to be more ambitious for ourselves, our disciplines, and our institutions, and to restore our fields to their rightful place.

PATRICIA NELSON LIMERICK

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This is my second visit to an ACLS meeting. Given that I broke my foot the first time I spoke at an ACLS meeting, the fact that I dared to come a second time surely indicates some toughness of character. The fracture occurred on my way to chair a panel discussion on American Indian Studies, and foot getting fatter by the moment, I asked for no mercy. When the panel discussion ended, I went for an x-ray. When the doctor saw the foot, he said, “Surely you have been staying off it and keeping it elevated!” to which my husband responded, with deep contempt, “No, she did not stay off it; she kept walking on it; and rather than going to a doctor, she *went to an academic convention!*” So I must be a very dedicated academic, a true and proven devotee of scholarly conventions, if I so easily and instantly chose the ACLS over an x-ray machine.

The reason to put pain aside and proceed with the chairing of that session is that John D’Arms was one of the world’s finest advocates for causes I believe in (and it is also true that he was very thoughtful after my little orthopedic adventure, sending me an occasional note with the inquiry, “How’s the foot?”). While I very much appreciated his solicitude, I appreciated even more his public statements about the need for academic humanists to shed obscurity and jargon, and to engage themselves with wider audiences. To remind us all of his vision, I was going to quote from a speech John gave at the University of Michigan in September of 2000. But then Chancellor Cantor beat me to it, so I had to sneak out to my hotel room and get more quotations. But then I decided I should read this again, and propose a plan to the ACLS: *print this quotation* on spiffy paper and in

handsome type; send us as many copies as we have humanities faculty on our campus, and assign us to sneak a copy into each faculty mailbox.

First-rate scholars, positioned at all points in the academic career cycle, need to shift the contemporary humanities dialogue beyond the self-referential to deeper understanding across departments and disciplines; more, we hope, will express impatience with the excessively specialized vocabularies and overly rigid disciplinary structures that have held the humanities back. Will we probe the interconnections and interdependencies with other fields that are needed in order to address increasingly urgent social problems?—for neither science nor the humanities, operating alone, can possibly deepen understanding in the many places where our natural and social worlds converge. Can we be more successful in connecting the findings of scholarship to a wider educated public? (D’Arms 2000)

In the same spirit, I quote from a speech John gave at Stanford in November of 1998: “We have a great opportunity to invigorate disciplines that have too often become marginalized, whether by the evolution of the university or by our own drifting toward the trivial, the pedantic, or the excessively abstract.”

For the next few minutes, I want to report on some activities that I believe John would have liked. I think they are activities he would have found amusing, and my highest hope would be that he would have found these activities to be proof that he had this right; he had accurately diagnosed both the problems of the humanities, and prescribed the *remedy* for the problems. So my focus is more on the “our future course” part of this panel’s title.

I should acknowledge that I only had brief personal encounters with John. We did have an exchange of correspondence on a couple of occasions, as John gracefully pointed out that if I had put my name

down as co-chair of the ACLS Development Committee, it would probably be a good move to get my own contribution in before the end of the year. But even if I did not know John well, I believe I know, thoroughly and completely, what he was talking about when he said, at Stanford, “The scholarly humanities have little or no influence, or special expertise, in public policy formulation; witness our lack of success with national funders—foundations and others—that are committed to agendas of broad societal change and improvement.” Or, as he put it in one of the ACLS Conversations, “One of the things that has been on my mind is the efficacy of our scholarship toward creating the social change we actually wanted to make at one point in our lives.” Remedies for this condition of inefficacy and impotence provide the punchline of these next stories.

For the last decade, I have had the good fortune to engage in an extended set of experiments, testing the propositions John put forward. I believe these experiments have entirely vindicated his faith in the potential of the humanities to play a role in the world beyond the university.

I am a Western American historian, and for a while I did the regular academic thing, working as hard as I could to advance the scholarly standing of the field of Western history. I found that line of activity very satisfying, and then, about a decade ago, I started getting more and more involved with public audiences. In 1995, I got a wonderful institutional opportunity to work with a moribund campus organization, the University of Colorado’s Center of the American West. Now I am faculty director and chair of the board of the Center. The Center today is no longer moribund. Our Chancellor has recently declared that Western American Studies is one of the three major areas of strength on our campus. Predictably, the two other areas are in the sciences: Space Sciences and Environmental Sciences. The American West initiative is the only one of the three based in the humanities.

In 10 to 15 minutes, I can only give the briefest sketch of the reasons why work with the Center has given me such faith in the power of the humanities to break out of old habits and become a valued player in seeking remedies for society’s dilemmas.

Here is the essence of what we do at the Center (with the much-appreciated support of the Hewlett Foundation): We seek out situations in which people are having a tough time coping with change, and then we try to help them think about *why* they are having such a tough time. History is very useful in this cause; a longer perspective can work as a kind of anti-anxiety drug, taking us out of this harried individual moment, and letting us look at the long haul. Or, rather than an analogy with psychopharmaceuticals, maybe a better approach would be to think of the command used at sheepdog trials: “Look back,” a handler will say or whistle to the dog, and the dog will look back over his shoulder and receive, thereby, a better perspective on the challenges that await him.

The two key topics for us are the tensions over growth in the West and the operations of the federal resource management agencies. Our first big effort, with both topics, was a book called *The Atlas of the New West*, published in 1997. We are now close to finishing a follow-up book called *The Handbook for the New West*. In terms of campus relations, it was probably our cleverest move to choose not to *compete* with the scientists and engineers (many of their departments, on our campus, are highly ranked in the nation), but to *collaborate with them*, to study them, to coach them, to critique them, and, speaking of sheepdog trials, sometimes to shepherd them.

Our approach is: don’t waste time complaining about the success of the scientists; persuade them to love us! One current project focuses on energy development in the interior West. We are, with this project, trying to correct the amnesia in public understanding of what oil, coal, and natural gas production booms have meant to Western communities. We are also reading documents like the Bush/Cheney energy plan closely and thoughtfully; we read such documents the way we were trained to read Herman Melville novels or Puritan sermons or justifications of slavery, looking for underlying assumptions and taken-for-granted habits of mind, so that we can call them into consciousness.

To find faculty participants in the energy initiative, we sent out a broadcast e-mail to the University of Colorado faculty, telling them

(in very expansive, wide-ranging terms) about our inquiry (including the ways in which “energy” can be a virtual synonym for “spirit” or “life-force”). The results of the e-mail were, I fear, diagnostic of the troubles the humanities face. A flood of engineers, geologists, and physicists responded to the message, took part in our planning sessions, and made presentations at a workshop. Out of 40 or so respondents to the e-mail, one was from the humanities, and that person declared that she had no particular expertise in issues of energy, but felt it was a topic of compelling political importance. The representatives from the sciences and engineering pled with us to find more humanities faculty: let us begin our workshop, they said, with a session on what human beings mean by energy. We did recruit a classicist, but otherwise our overtures were solidly turned down. And yet the engineers and scientists kept appealing for humanities participation. At one meeting, when I remarked that a landscape full of wind turbines was ugly, one of the engineers looked very hurt and said, “I think they’re beautiful!” The door was wide open for an expansive discussion of aesthetics and perspective, but there was no one on hand willing to go through that door.

Our method, in essence, is this: we read or listen to debates over contemporary issues, practices, activities, and we reflect on the unexamined assumptions, the larger cultural context, the positioning in time of those texts and practices. The good news is that public audiences are very receptive to humanities-based commentary. Thanks to this society’s habits of specialization, your audiences will often be astonished by the perceptiveness of what you tell them—because this will be, for many, one of the first times they have been invited to think about the larger context of their work. So we try to draw lessons that will, at a minimum, give people a framework for examining their own actions and assumptions, and, on days of higher ambition, we try to nudge them toward what we think would be better practices. At the very least, we seem to get somewhere in persuading people to listen, receptively and tolerantly, to ideas that in other forms of presentation, would just make them mad.

I’ll describe one last example. I had been invited to speak to the Agricultural Section of the Colorado Bar Association—not just

farm lawyers, but also representatives of various agricultural groups and interests. The “Ag Section” is a pretty conservative group, and I worked hard to disarm them, reminiscing about the baby chicks that my farm-raised father got me when I was a kid, chicks that turned into chickens, and then (after acts of considerable violence by my father) into dinner. But I had a goal, and that goal was to get my audience to think critically about individualism and private property.

Ask advocates for Colorado agriculture to question individualism? Good luck getting out of town safely.

I asked them to join me in answering the question, “If we had to choose the top five reasons that agriculture has lost power and why the number of farms has declined so rapidly over the last century and a half, what features or events would make that list?” There are a number of items to put high on that list—international competition, manipulations by agricultural products corporations. But the list would be incomplete if it did not include the farmers’ own devotion to individualism and private property, which has made it difficult for farmers to form cooperatives, or agree on collaborative marketing strategies, or to present a united front against developers looking to purchase agricultural water rights or ranchlands for home sites.

The Ag folks took this remark in very tranquilly. Some of them talked about it at lunch, and then came up to me and said that they had never really thought about how this individualism thing posed problems for them, but now it was something they wanted to think about. So if you can use the humanities and history to get farmers and their attorneys to think critically about individualism, then the humanities have a lot of unexplored power and possibility. The question, alas, is whether you can get humanities professors to think critically about individualism, in order to unleash that power and possibility!

History has not made the statement “I have seen the future and it works” into a very auspicious phrase. But in terms of the humanities and the wider world, I *have* seen a possible future, and I *have* seen it work. But it is also true that the obstacles are enormous and very powerful. While some are obstacles external to universities, the obstacles on the inside are equally substantial. Resistance from

within the humanities, and *within* the humanists themselves, may well control the outcome. It is true that academic resistance to public engagement is very substantial, but since I wanted to give a cheerful talk today, I am purposefully and intentionally running out of time before I can discuss this resistance in any depth. Instead I will end with one more quotation from John D'Arms (1998), expressing his desire that we would explore the usefulness of the humanities in social change: "The learned societies, and individual scholars, that view the act of reaching out as engaging in serious acts of scholarly translation, seem to me to be approaching the public in ways most likely to be productive."

NEIL RUDENSTINE

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John and I met just 50 years ago, as undergraduates at Princeton. But it was only when we found ourselves in residence at New College, Oxford—beginning in the autumn of 1956—that we had the chance to meet and talk regularly. John was reading “Greats,” as it (or they) were called: Ancient Greek and Roman history, literature and philosophy. And I was reading English literature, which started with *Beowulf* and—in a romp from one monster to another—ended (rather prematurely) with Byron’s *Manfred* and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

Thanks to the wisdom of Oxford’s academic calendar, there were three long vacations every year. And so it happened that John and I (often with other friends) undertook several impecunious equivalents of the European Grand Tour: prolonged picaresque escapades in France, Austria, Italy, and other then-inexpensive hinterlands.

In the spring of 1957, we went to Naples, and had our first glimpse of its glittering bay. Then, afterward, on to Pompeii and Paestum, eating pasta and reading Pliny or Plautus along the way—while John insisted on tasting every trattoria’s 50-lira carafe of red table wine before he would definitively commit to ordering his 50-lira plate of spaghettini, linguine, or rigatoni.

I remember, especially, one day at Paestum, under a cerulean sky, walking—in sunshine and shadow—through and about and around the great main temple, with its elemental strength, as well as its iconic simplicity and rugged grace. By the time John and I were ready to leave, it was too late to find any lodging for the night. Strategic planning was not precisely our strongest suit in those days. John

suggested that we should simply unroll our sleeping bags, and make ourselves at home on the nearby Mediterranean sandy shoreline—something that, in 1957, one could actually do, because there were no tourists, no fences, and no obvious traces of government guardians in sight.

Despite my deep suspicion of the sea and all that therein lies, I agreed—only to be awakened rather later, at 2 or 3 a.m., by the sound of rolling and apparently encroaching waves, which seemed to me as if they had moved—in the last few hours—at least 10 or 20 yards closer to us.

“John,” I said, prodding him, “John, the tide’s coming in, and it’s about to wash right over us.” John woke up, sat up, surveyed the scene for a moment, then turned and said: “Rudenstine, there *is* no tide in the Mediterranean.”

This D’Armsian declaration of undisputed fact resolved the issue. After all, who was I to argue with the companion of Odysseus, and the first oarsman of the Argonauts? Nonetheless, I kept my own uneasy eyes open, watching the waves until dawn, when it became clear that we were (of course) still as dry (and about as far from the sea) as we had been since the previous evening.

These images and episodes re-surfaced recently, as I thought about John’s vital and rich life of learning. Because the vivacity of that life, the energy and appetite with which he engaged so many aspects of experience, and the variegated range (along with the strict exactitude) of his learning, were all of a piece—and were already apparent in our early Neapolitan wanderings, stretching not only to Pompeii and Paestum, but to Cumae, Lake Avernus, Potueoli, Ostia and Rome.

These and other nearby haunts became, over the years, John’s scholarly habitat: visited by him time and time again, studied, explored, scrutinized in fine detail, re-imagined, affectionately foraged, and increasingly, steadily loved.

So it was, that John’s scholarship and learning—blossoming over the years in two major books, and a fecundity of articles, papers, and reviews—never lost touch with those first dramatic, transfixing encounters, nearly half a century ago: encounters which at the time took the form of stunning revelations that John experienced, then

absorbed, and then sustained for a lifetime afterward, with so much of their original force and freshness still intact, providing generative power for what he later wrote about, talked about, and taught to his students, as well as to his friends.

His passion for those Roman and Italian places, for the aesthetic of their landscapes and seascapes, for their villas, lakes, temples, trattorias, towns, inhabitants, and social mores—whether ancient or modern—was always (at the very least) equal to his developing passion for epigraphy, for elusive historical fact, taut argumentation, archaeological excavation, and treasured, crafted footnotes. All were inseparable parts of a single larger encompassing whole, which was simply John himself: John energetically, wittily, seriously, omnivorously becoming ever more John, as Oxford followed Princeton, Harvard followed Oxford, Ann Arbor followed Harvard, and the ACLS followed everything that preceded.

Not quite a year ago, John sent me an off-print of his most recent published article. Its subject was a substantial philanthropic donation made by a particular citizen in a modest-sized ancient Roman town. The only evidence for what proved to be an unusually illuminating episode in Roman social history, was a set of inscriptions, carved in stone pedestals found by chance about three decades ago. Since the carved lettering was seriously abraded, de-coding the inscriptions was immensely complicated. Indeed, the only previous attempts were, as John tactfully showed, hopelessly inaccurate and misleading. John cracked the code, and elucidated the entire tale surrounding the gift in question, showing how it was almost certainly part of a complex, subtle process of larger social change. The achievement of the article, however, was not purely the description of a “process.” It depended in addition upon John’s capacity to evoke so much of the human texture of the situation. The donor, he concluded, must have been someone “obsessively concerned to perpetuate his own memory.” Moreover, he was also a person determined to improve—as benignly as possible—his rather indeterminate social standing, and that of his family. John expressed some concern, however, that one stipulation in this ancient deed of gift might, unfortunately, not last nearly as long as our donor hoped: to wit, the stipulation that this generous

act of philanthropy (and of course the philanthropist himself) should be celebrated every year, in perpetuity, with a smashing multi-course dinner at which a rather special brew of “honeyed wine” —a detail that John was careful not to overlook—would be served and presumably drunk. As matters turned out, John’s sympathetic concern was not misplaced. As far as we know, the annual dinners have long since ceased to be served, and not even a single litre of the original eccentric wine has survived.

This scholarly performance was, alas, John’s final one—and it was written amidst the multiplicity of his duties as President of the ACLS. In its intellectual elegance, incisiveness, versatility, and charm, it embodied many of John’s personal qualities, as well as his qualities as a scholar, humanist, and man of learning.

For some people in his field, the basic task of de-coding—accurately—those nearly illegible inscriptions, would have been sufficiently satisfying. For others, providing some intelligent speculation concerning the social context of the recorded gift would have added a perfectly adequate grace-note. But for John, it was essential to know about (and therefore to be able to adumbrate) all the social nuances and implications of what was taking place in this episode, not only microscopically, but also in terms of the larger “macro” processes at work. Finally, it was essential, insofar as the evidence allowed, to make the donor come to life—to be seen as human, with the kinds of hopes, concerns, foibles, ambitions and pleasures that other people in other societies might also have: because history and learning simply had to be, in John’s view, human and humane in this absolutely fundamental way.

To say that John’s work was intrinsically and compellingly interdisciplinary, or that it was in the advance-guard of ancient Roman social history, or that it was as imaginative as it was precise, is helpful, and important for us to know. But what these characterizations do not of course convey was John’s instinctive desire to know and master everything from topography to gastronomy, psychology, archaeology, numismatics, metrics, aesthetics, literary theory, historiography, and the Cumean equivalent of anthropological kinship patterns. These energies and benign conquistadorial impulses

were obvious in the variety of John's achievements—scholarly and otherwise—throughout his career. If I can add anything to this portrait, it would simply be to confirm that virtually all of these characteristics were already abundantly in evidence many decades ago.

It was clearly no accident that, at Oxford, John unhesitatingly chose to read the “Greats,” rather than the myrmidons. And if there were nothing more challenging to do in a diminutive Italian *borgo*, why not pass the time in testing the vintage of the next carafe of plainly undrinkable table wine? And if one had to decide, abruptly, where to spend a random night, why not lead one's tiny brigade straight to the Mediterranean shore-line, come what may?

So it was that the faultless taste and fine discrimination of the convivial future ACLS President was trained in obscure Calabrian trattorias.

The impressive decision-making powers of the future Michigan Dean and Vice-Provost were practiced and partly perfected—à la King Canute—through bold assertions that the waves of the sea would undoubtedly remain at bay, as indeed they did.

What did *not* require training or practice, however, were John's natural generosity and special charisma, his many talents to amuse, and his capacity to buoy and sustain so many people who were fortunate enough to be a part of his life. He possessed—happily, for all of us—a plentitude of those vital spirits that enable learning to blossom, institutions to flower, and life itself to flourish. He was a devoted friend and affectionate companion, and I feel deeply privileged to be able to celebrate him today, as part of your learned company.

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