

December 4, 1986

Dear Emmett,

Many thanks for your long and thoughtful letter. Your advice is not applicable to the present situation, ^{alone} but to the whole project I'm on, since in effect I am trying to place in history, that means a continuous narrative, the event of the alphabet's invention, on the basis of the same kind of information wherefrom I spin the fantastic story of the literate foreigner on the slopes of the Acropolis. I think my opponents will wring their hands with joy when I stoop to rhetoric, not facts, but with your guidance I hope that I nonetheless can beat them in the end. If you had other thoughts as you promised, please send them too, but what I have already is occasion for real improvement, and I have already moved some of it into my APA talk.

Speaking of which, Sir Ronald Syme is in town for this week, thanks to Mike Clover, and I have been attending his talks and social events. It has been good, because of bringing the department back into social communion, at least on a limited basis. The big news is that some guy called Matthew Santirocco at Columbia, who has published a book and 20 articles, two of which were in convincing journals, looks good enough to the dean to inspire another target of special opportunity. The most helpful person here proves to be Ken Sacks, who shares with me a vision of improved conditions for serious study, though he of course differs in the details. Sacks holds the fate of MW in his hands and he has decided, I think, to throw his lot our way. You see the Santirocco thing makes this palatable.

John Bennet has pleased everyone, been a friend and colleague to me, and makes Ken Sacks quite blithery. Don't tell John but I think it's us who fear losing John when, we hope, John fears losing us. As if that were ^{me} good enough, we now have a new Greek and Latin Reading Room on the 4th floor, and it is a honey. I am already conspiring with John Dillon to keep up the collection with a steady donation from the Grau fund (wish me luck) and Sacks and Bennet are thinking of ways to spend \$15,000 to install a vacs system, whatever that is, which will anyhow have the TLG, with terminals at the Institute, Classics, GLRR, and History. We could put Linear B on the damn thing! You better get back here fast before we modernize beyond hope of recovery.

Me, Moon, Clover will interview at APA and now maybe Sacks, who is getting steamed up. I won't be able to hear any of those great papers. Damn! Except my own, of course.

Merry Xmas

B.