

VEXILLUM

the undergraduate journal of
classical and medieval studies

Issue 5

2016

**Funding for *Vexillum* provided by
The Medieval Studies Program at Yale University**

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Available online at <http://vexillumjournal.org/>

Foreword

EDWARD MEAD BOWEN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Reader:

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the long-awaited fifth issue of *Vexillum*, now complete after a year of tremendous change. It is the first issue that I have directed as Editor-in-Chief, the first completed under the supervision of our newly expanded editorial board, and the first to feature a revitalized team of committed peer reviewers, all of whom are currently enrolled undergraduates or holders of newly minted bachelor's degrees. We also received thirty-five submissions during this issue's application cycle—an unprecedented number, and one that we expect only to increase with our greater involvement in academic circles and social media. These welcome developments have required some adjustments and delays, as has been the case for this issue; I thank you for your patience as we work to take the journal in worthy and exciting new directions. Through such provisions we continue to further *Vexillum's* mission of mentoring young scholars and providing a dedicated venue for their scholarship in order that they can contribute their fresh voices and perspectives to ongoing discussions in their fields.

One of the most prominent changes in this issue is its lack of classical content. This lack stems partly from the content of this year's submissions pool. While *Vexillum* received submissions for its ancient and classical category this year, submissions in our late antique and medieval category far exceeded them in both volume and quality. This has been a general trend for submissions in recent years. Furthermore, funding from Yale University's Medieval Studies Program, staff connections in the medieval studies community, editorial expertise in late antique and medieval subjects, and lesser expertise in classical subjects all make for compelling reasons for the journal to deepen its late antique and medieval emphases. As such, our next issue, Issue 6, will in all likelihood be the last issue that features classical material for the foreseeable future. We may resume a classical focus at a later time, and bearing in mind *Vexillum's* initial classical emphasis and the nod to these origins in the journal's title, we have not made this decision lightly. However, we believe that playing to our current strengths will best allow us to pursue our stated purpose and to better serve both our editors and our audience.

Though *Vexillum's* focus may have shifted, we remain committed to presenting the best of our undergraduate work and to helping our published authors achieve their submissions' full potential. Toward this end, we have maintained a small ratio of acceptances to overall submissions while also improving the ratio of editors to accepted submissions, ensuring that each author is assigned a personal subject editor to advise him or her in the revision process. 2016 will also mark the beginning of a series of bold new initiatives designed to augment the journal's online presence, expand its conference participation, and further its involvement with undergraduate mentorship. As we stride forth into the future, I hope you will join us in making our vision a reality.

Edward Mead Bowen
University of California, Los Angeles, 2016