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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DISK: Job Market 1993-94

My Traumdeutungsgeschichte the other day elicited the kindly suggestion from one anonymous benefactor that I sleep with the windows open to clear my head of anthropological miasma. I tried that, and in spite of the high powered down quilt, it was too chilly to sleep, so I passed the night studying the APA job list that announces academic positions in classics and related fields. Old

BMCR readers will know that this is a hobby of mine (of a sort much too readily and accurately understood by Freudians, alas), and numbers emerge. For earlier evidence of this obsession, you might gopher to look for BMCR 1.2.19, 2.1.20, and 2.6.25.

Now the first thing to say is that any reasonable statistician would tell you that these numbers are garbage. I have ranted here before about the poor quality of the information we have about the size and shape of our profession, particularly the pool of students considering graduate school, the pool of people finishing degrees in any year, and the number of actual academic positions awaiting them. (There are limits even to *my* obsessiveness, but my learned colleague Hamilton went through APA newsletters counting Ph.D.'s awarded in 1993 and gets a total of 82 in the US and Canada.) We have no good numbers for any of those categories, and we suffer accordingly.

The numbers I collect have one merit which earns them some attention, however, and that is that they have been collected over a number of years from a consistently-generated data set. That means that though the numbers are meaningless in absolute terms, they have some value relative to each other, especially if patterns are reasonably consistent, as they are. All I can point to here is the probability of a modest and worrisome trend. The data may be quite misleading, but I know of no way to improve on what we know short of some serious improvement in our capacity for data gathering.

To reprise the old story, numbers from as far back as 1985/86 through 1990/91 suggested a fairly steady state, with something like 90-100 jobs per year in classics and archaeology. In 1991/92, there seemed to be a drop, to something like 65-75. Last year, my compulsion eased or I slept with the windows shut, and I did not make numbers. What is the story this year?

With 273 people publishing c.v.'s in the book of candidates (up from 244 three years ago), I find that there are a total of 65 jobs in categories matching what I have counted in the past. I broke these down further (no past figures to match them quite this way) thus:

art/archaeology, 13 jobs, of which 9 are tenure track

language/literature/history, 52 jobs, of which 34 are tenure track. (I note further that 8 of the tenure track jobs are listed as possible and three of the temporary jobs are only possible.)

The 52 total in "classics" matches 92 in the same category three years ago, while the 13 archaeology are up from 8 three years ago.

Now the decline is not so sharp as against two years ago, but the perception on the street seems bleaker this year. I will suggest several reasons:

(1) Several consecutive years of a reduction will lead to a gradually filling pipeline—I can name several first water candidates, e.g., who last year got only temporary positions and who are back in line again this year;

(2) Elite institutions (however you define them; let's say those with Ph.D. programs that produce appreciable numbers of job-seekers themselves, or else those small liberal arts colleges that send disproportionate numbers of their students on to graduate school) are sharply underrepresented this year. Brown, Chapel Hill, and Stanford (with perhaps two positions) are the only tenure track jobs I find in this category, with long-term assistant professor-

ships with little prospect of tenure at Columbia and Hopkins to sweeten the pot.

(3) To judge by murmurings I hear, the number of positions specifying that the applicant should be demonstrably friendly to the religious orientation of the institution seems up perceptibly (a rise may be slight but perceptible), and in a world in which the typical trajectory from school to college to graduate school is one from narrower to more broadly diverse communities, the thought that *someone* will be found wanting for reasons other than scholarship has a chilling effect perhaps out of proportion to the intentions of the advertisers.

One other observation: My numbers are incomplete in this regard, but the percentage of advertised jobs that do not clearly specify a specialty of preference (even so that I can distinguish them as crudely as Greek Lit., Latin Lit., Ancient Hist., Archaeo.) seems to be rising. Greek Lit. is still the specialty least often expressly sought, while the generalist who can teach the languages but can help out with history, culture, and perhaps season the teaching with a little archaeology seems to be the person with something to sell these days.

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