tion is that she invites us to reconsider familiar texts and historical episodes in a new and interesting light.

John T. Ramsey  
Dept. of Classics (M/C 129), 601 S. Morgan St.  
Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago IL 60607-7112

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Welcome to Lake Wobegon, where all the teachers are inspiring and all the scholars distinguished. This volume comprises 600 biographical sketches of the blessed dead, with dates of birth ranging from 1578 to 1944 and dates of death as late as 1993; indices by date of birth, institution of primary affiliation, and institution of final degree supplement the main entries. Each such entry comprises a curriculum vitae, a short notice in obituary prose, and a bibliography. The editing has been consistent and the accuracy is, so far as I have been able to verify, high; the printing is from desktop-prepared camera-ready copy with the usual admixture of faux pas. The volume will be a welcome point of reference for those of us who still believe, at least some of the time, in "authors" and wish to know more about the personalities and careers that have made up our profession. In many respects, the book is a box of chocolates, and it would take the obtuseness and the asceticism of Forrest Gump to refrain from devouring it at a sitting or two. If many of the anecdotes make one think of Stith Thompson and Ben Trovato, they are nonetheless invariably edifying and usually pleasant. As I was leafing the final pages in my study two blocks from the Bryn Mawr campus, I was brought up short with a whoop of delight at finding the entry on Wilmer Cave Wright, Loeb translator of Julian, who was seen hereabouts near the year of my birth: "'Even in her eighties her students and colleagues likened her to 'Pallas Athena herself, walking the earth with a proud look and a clank of silver'"." The type, thank goodness, is not yet extinct.

But what is such a book for? The preface begins programatically: There is no book-length history of classical scholarship in America of even the sort that M.L. Clarke has given for England. We have no account of classics in the schools, no bibliography of its professors, no biographies of even such great figures as Gildersleeve, Goodwin, Shorey, or Oldfather, and few histories of departments. There are autobiographies and memoirs, but of considerably lesser lights. We have seen much work on the influence of the classics on our Founding Fathers, particularly from Meyer Reinhold, but we have very little on the growth of Classical Studies and the professionalization of the field in the 19th and 20th centuries.
Very true, but far from complete. Why does the want of a history of classical scholarship immediately make one pine for biographical resources? What is the role of biography in a history of classical scholarship? To hear some of our most strenuous practitioners, its role is great. They characterize those of us who hanker for something more professional as if we “disparage” those who talk about American classical scholarship, but I must continue to demur. A volume of this sort, and the biographical enterprises it resembles, can only be a small part of any serious history of classical scholarship, and can loom misleadingly large.

For one thing, the volume’s criteria of inclusiveness show a serious inattention to the practices of prosopographers. The editor reports that initial and lofty sentiment had been to include those who had “significant reputations as publishing scholars”. Fearing, perhaps, that the resultant pamphlet would not recover its costs of publishing, the net was more broadly cast and several goals were set: to be “representative”, to try to include at least one representative from each major institution in North America (a goal not met), and in the end to seek “simply some kind of significant contribution to the profession”. Well and good, but the history of a profession is not the history of its successes only but also of its failures. A collection of success stories is not history, it is Plutarch; or rather it is Nepos, except in those occasional entries here, almost all by a contributor whose name shall remain obvious, where a dollop of unctuousness or a dash of vitriol makes one think momentarily of Suetonius or the Historia Augusta.

To do this job in a way that would lead to real history, there would have to be serious work done on, say, the history of individual representative departments, systematically reconstructing full departmental fasti, tracking provenances of short-term as well as permanent faculty, tracking the afterlives of graduates, seeking to understand the obscurities and the failures, as well as those who made significant contributions.

A further problem arises in the execution of the task here. The volume is first and foremost a work of pietas (again with the exception of that single contributor). The more recent figures are described by their friends or students (in one case by a son), others are catalogued by a present or recent member of departments they founded or distinguished. To take this prose seriously, the incidence of careers derailed by alcohol, for example, is very substantially below any reasonable estimate of the average for professions like this. To read the numerous 20th-century entries from one of our more distinguished institutions is to see clearly a wall of pious evasion behind which a very different story must have been transpiring, but we are left without the means to get past it at what looks to be an interesting, even decisive, struggle for control of the profession’s destiny in one important place. But if discretion and piety were to be the rule, then

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1Pietas is doubtless the motive of the editor and his contributors, but one may suspect that the publisher has a different aim, that of finding as many ingenious ways as possible to tax the acquisitions budgets of our research libraries. At the date of this writing, the University of Pennsylvania has not yet acquired this volume, but has precisely 50 titles already on its shelves published by Greenwood and calling themselves “biographical dictionaries”. 
we could as well have done without the obituary prose and seen an increase in the number of figures covered instead.

What emerges most strikingly in the prose is the narrow range of conventional epithets available. If I had a copy of the computer file from which this book was printed, I would ask it to count the occurrences of "humanist", a word whose ideological freight train rumbles heavily through these pages. Figure after figure is characterized as much by ideological affiliation (i.e., what people believed in and stood for) as by achievement; we are told not what they sought to learn from the Classics, but what they were sure they would find. The variety of critical, curious, and keen-sighted intellects that our discipline has produced is smoothed and leveled into a gallery of what one introductory essay frankly calls "imagines maiorum". The difficulty that arises with such a collection is not that it seeks to do history of classical scholarship, but that it does it so naively. There are among us men and women who have read not only Nepos and Suetonius, but even Tacitus and Thucydides, to say nothing of Namier and Syme, to say nothing again of Lawrence Stone, Isaiah Berlin, or Anthony Grafton. The lessons learned from such reading have not been applied here.

There are two introductory essays summarizing the implicit history. Though this is a dictionary of "North American" classicists, it has proved necessary to separate the United States and Canada for the purpose of these essays. For the United States, we have 21 pages from William M. Calder III, who outlines the history of the profession in the U.S. entirely in terms of its relations to European institutions and immigrants therefrom. The last of the five periods he identifies, e.g., 1968-1993, is called "The Second Emigration" and is described as the age of Walther Ludwig, Albert Henrichs, Ludwig Koenen, and Kurt Raaflaub (all of whom will read this particular page with astonishment, I venture). I refrain from quoting p. xxi, lines 3-4 lest I be accused of misrepresentation, but look forward to reading them in the newsletter of the Women's Classical Caucus before too long.

Alexander McKay writes at comparable length on Canada with more balance and at the same time a warm personal touch, and has the merit of linking the blessed dead with the present personnel and trajectories of the institutions. Neither Calder nor McKay, however, succeeds in linking developments among classicists with the rest of the intellectual and scholarly world. One comes away in the end with a very imprecise idea of just why it is that the authors of this volume or its subjects, apart from their habitual use of the word "humanist", devoted so much of themselves to this remarkable calling.

But to write real history of classical scholarship, one need be more than a philologist on a Bummel. One or two names may have escaped me, but I believe it is true to say that every single contributor to this volume (there are over 170) is him- or herself eligible for inclusion in one of its successors—they are all classicists. American cultural and intellectual history is a serious discipline ably practiced in many of our institutions. To prepare such a book without the collaboration of a single representative of that discipline is an astonishing feat of self-denial, but one which seems in retrospect to be of as questionable a value as the comparable feats of the desert ascetics of late antiquity. To write serious history of scholarship is a high calling, and it may very well be our misfortune as a
profession simply not to attract the time and attention of worthy practitioners; but perhaps in the end we should not forbid ourselves to wonder aloud just what it is American classicists might have done to earn such attention. Perhaps a gallery of pious images is the best we can hope for.

James J. O’Donnell
University of Pennsylvania