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*GESCHICHTE DER ALTERTUMSWISSENSCHAFTEN
BIOGRAPHISCHES LEXIKON*

ED. BY P. KUHLMANN, H. SCHNEIDER,
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At the beginning of the 20th c. John Edwin Sandys was the first who published, in three volumes, a work devoted to the history of scholarly activity on Antiquity¹. Since its publication, the literature has been enriched by numerous works², however only a few attempt to present academic biographies of scholars of Antiquity, and they are mainly of an encyclopedic nature not usually taking into account more contemporary

¹ J.E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship from the Sixth Century B.C. to the Present Day*, 1–3 (1903–1908). The work's title, suggesting its wide scope of interest is, however, misleading, as the author – which should be emphasized – focused predominantly on presenting biographical entries of the scholars of Antiquity.

² See, for example: U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Geschichte der Philologie*, (1921); R. Pfeiffer, *History of classical scholarship from the beginnings to the end of the Hellenistic Age*, (1968); K. Christ, *Von Gibbon zu Rostovtzeff. Leben und Werk führender Althistoriker der Neuzeit*, (1972); R. Pfeiffer, *History of classical scholarship from 1300 to 1850*, (1976); R. Pfeiffer, *Die Klassische Philologie von Petrarca bis Mommsen*, (1982); *Aspects of Nineteenth-Century British Classical Scholarship*, ed. H.D. Jocelyn, (*Liverpool Classical Papers* 5, 1996); H. Sichtermann, *Kulturgeschichte der Klassischen Archäologie*, (1996).

scholars and their findings³. The work reviewed here is the most recent and the most expanded of these publications. It contains biographical entries on more than seven hundred scholars from the 14th to the end of the 20th c.⁴, published as the sixth supplement to the prestigious *Der Neue Pauly* series, with Peter Kuhlmann (Professor of Classical studies at Göttingen University) and Helmuth Schneider (Professor of Ancient history at Kassel University) as academic editors.

The work, an enterprise with a wide scope not only in academic but also in organizational and publishing terms (more than 250 authors of entries, seven editors from different research areas and eleven translators), presents the biographies and academic achievements of scholars of Antiquity from the late Middle Ages to the end of the 20th c. Thus, the lexicon contains data concerning not only the profiles of many philosophers, collectors and antiquarians from the Renaissance period (such as Pirro Ligorio), but also historians of Antiquity, classical philologists, historians of law, archeologists, sociologists, scholars of religion, historians of art, epigraphers, numismatists, papyrologists, egyptologists, specialists on the Near East, and anthropologists. Thus, the focus of *Biographisches Lexikon* includes biographies of the whole *Altertumswissenschaft* at its widest,

³ F.A. Eckstein, *Nomenclator philologorum*, (1871); W. Pökel, *Philologisches Schriftsteller-Lexikon*, (1882); E. Cosenza, *Biographical and bibliographical dictionary of the Italian humanists and of the world of classical scholarship in Italy, 1300–1800*, 1–6 (1962–1967); *Classical Scholarship. A biographical Encyclopedia*, ed. W.W. Briggs, W.M. Calder III, (1990); *Biographical dictionary of North American classicists*, ed. W.W. Briggs, (1994); L.M. Medwid, *The makers of classical archaeology: a reference work*, (2000); *The Dictionary of British Classicists*, ed. R.B. Todd, (2004); È. Gran-Aymerich, *Les chercheurs de passé: 1798–1945. Aux sources de l'archéologie*, with a preface by J. Leclant, (2007). It is worth emphasizing that the biographical entries of outstanding scholars, such as Edward Gibbon, Theodor Mommsen or Jacob Burckhardt, are also presented in works devoted to the lives of the greatest historians of the modern era. See for example: *Klassiker der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1: *Von Edward Gibbon bis Marc Bloch*, ed. L. Raphael, (2006).

⁴ For comparison, it is worth noticing that the previous encyclopedia included 50 biographical entries of scholars living in the period from Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) to Arnaldo Momigliano (1908–1987). See: *Classical Scholarship*, passim.

including those closer to our times such as Walter Eder (1941–2009), Ernst Badian (1925–2011) and Géza Alföldy (1935–2011), which is especially worthwhile and praiseworthy.

In its preface the work lists those involved in writing the lexicon (i.e. the authors of entries, as well as the translators of those originally written in languages other than German), followed by a foreword containing the basic assumptions and criteria, an outline of works on Antiquity from the times of Petrarch to the end of the 20th c., a glossary of abbreviations, a chronological list from Loenzio Pilato (?–1366) to Nicole Loraux (1943–2003), explanations concerning the transcription of Greek letters, and finally the biographical entries themselves, together with a very useful index of names.

Commenting on the content of over 700 entries is an extremely difficult task which is why I shall limit myself to making the statement that the method of formulating entries, implemented virtually throughout, seems not only appropriate but exceptionally clear, logical and useful. Each entry provides basic facts concerning a given scholar, their professional work and academic achievements, while also enumerating their most important works and with valuable bibliographical references. My analysis will focus solely on the idea behind this ambitious undertaking and the method of selecting the 700 and more scholars presented. For obvious reasons (the decisive factor here was the limited size of the volume in the first place), the editors had to use specific criteria for selection, as it is impossible to present all the important scholars who contributed to research on Antiquity, something the editors themselves openly admit in the foreword (p. XIII). Who should thus be chosen or omitted?

Chronologically speaking, although *Biographisches Lexikon* contains profiles of scholars from the 14th to the 21st c., over half the articles are devoted to scholars from the last two centuries. Such a proportion can be justified as this was the period when the position of academic activity on Antiquity was being shaped, with particular branches becoming gradually more specialized. One sign of the process was the establish-

ment of separate chairs and institutes of classical philology, Antiquity, classical archeology, Egyptology and Oriental Studies. The editors of the volume to avoid disproportion decided not to include biographical entries on outstanding living scholars such as Werner Eck or Fergus Millar who have had a much greater influence on developments than some of the scholars presented. However, the object of making contemporary readers familiar with the academic achievements of scholars from the recent and more distant past appears to be a justified and convincing practice.

Another, more controversial, criterion which should be mentioned is geographical. The primary assumption in this respect, declared by the editors in the foreword (p. XIII), concerns the equal treatment of research in Germany with other European countries and the USA. Thus, the biographical encyclopedia was aimed at “umfassendes internationales Arbeitsinstrument zur Geschichte der Altertumswissenschaften”. Although it seems perhaps obvious, the lexicon predominantly consists of entries devoted to German scholars but with some space devoted to Italian, French, Austrian, British, American and Greek as well. What is striking is the lack of scholars from Central and Eastern Europe. Such outstanding researchers as Tadeusz Zieliński (1859–1944), a classical philologist (mentioned in the work merely as the teacher of Michail I. Rostovtzeff, col. 1083) should certainly be included, or the historians of Roman law Adolf Berger (1882–1962) and Rafał Taubenschlag (1881–1958). Their contribution to the development of research on Antiquity seems indisputable⁵. The international character of the biographical study declared in the foreword, although legitimate, has not been fully realized. The ambition of the editors of such a comprehensive lexicon should be to present not only the facts concerning well-known and widely described scholars such as Edward Gibbon or Theodor

⁵ See, for example: A. Gillmeister, *The Point of View. Tadeusz Zieliński on Ancient Religions*, (*Akme. Studia Historica* 11, 2013); W. Osuchowski, *In memoriam Raphael Taubenschlag (1881–1958)*, “The Journal of Juristic Papyrology”, 13 (1961), pp. 7–15; M.M. Fryde, *Adolf Berger 1882–1962*, “Polish Review”, 7, 3 (1963), pp. 1–12.

Mommsen, but also the profiles of scholars of equal importance but not so strongly present in the literature. It seems that the goal might have been achieved if the idea of the volume had been worked on by an even larger international group of editors.

Despite the above-mentioned annotations, it must be admitted that *Biographisches Lexikon* is undoubtedly an extraordinary and needed work. For the first time, readers are presented with an impressive compendium of over 700 biographical entries of scholars, and which to a large extent provides an answer to the question: Who was who in classical studies?

