

"Thinking in terms of the person" is a historiographical strategy to channel and represent complex historical developments. Part of a panel that reassesses the usefulness of ancient biographical traditions in the light of recent suggestions to rethink both the reliability and the viability of literary and philosophical "lives" for classical scholarship, this paper intends to move one step back behind this more recent work. It looks to the cluster of works, mostly German and mostly of the turn of the nineteenth century, which we find consistently referred to as standard works on the categorization and (literary) historiography of "lives" as a genre (for example Bruns 1896; Leo 1901; Misch 1907).

Examining more closely how the disciplinary vocabulary of approaching those "lives" was constituted in the first place, we find that the strong attention to "thinking in terms of the person" was not accidental. Instead, this new wave of interest in *bioi* and the biographical as a category connected to a much larger web of issues to do with the status and self-definition of classical scholarship as a disciplinary practice. Leo, for example, maps what he identifies as Peripatetic and Plutarchean strands of biographizing onto a tension between "science" (*Wissenschaft*) and "art" as categories of thought and of practice – a tension that is itself prominent in the cultural debate around 1900. Momigliano (1971/1993), too, hinted at the fact that some of the groups singled out by this flurry of scholarly works on biography, such as the Peripatetics, appear strikingly similar to Mommsen-type classical scholars bent on complete mastery of their evidence. We can take such insights further and examine how individuality as a key parameter of the study of classical antiquity had been a staple of institutionalized classical scholarship throughout the nineteenth century, with concepts of individuality relating both to literary, cultural and historical production in antiquity and to the position of the contemporary scholar. But we should also ask how and to what extent the image of the Humanities, and of classical philology as one of its most prominent instances, which was interrogated exactly at that point in time (for example in the work of Wilhelm Dilthey), shaped the interpretation of ancient biographical materials, and their classification, well into the twentieth century.

This paper, in other words, approaches the relationship between biography and reception in terms of understanding scholarship as acts of reception. By analyzing and contextualizing the categories, literary historiography, and classifications of some of these standard works on ancient literary and philosophical lives which we still use as reference points I hope to make that area of scholarly terminology more defamiliarized and transparent enough to allow a better, and profitable dialogue with current research on the uses of ancient "lives" in their own environment.