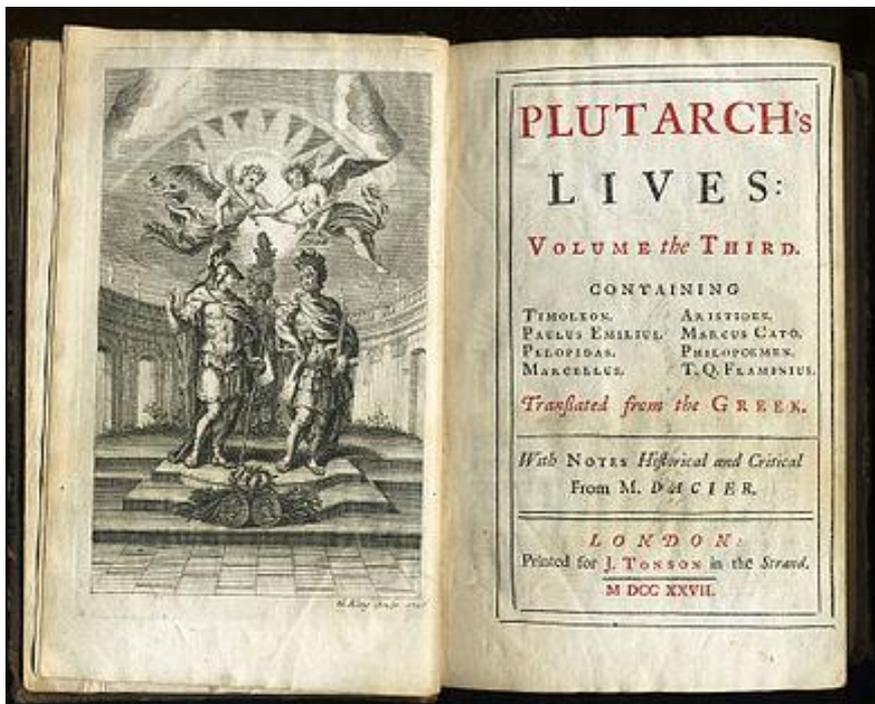


National Centre of Biography, ANU

Biography Workshop

Hans Renders

Old Lives, New Questions



Date: Thursday 28 February 2019
Venue: Jean Martin Room,
Beryl Rawson Building,
13 Ellery Cres, ANU
Time: 11:00 am until c. 12.30 pm*
Contact: Nicole.McLennan@anu.edu.au

Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, Vol. 3, 1727 ed., printed by Jacob Tonson

This workshop is about traditions and current questions in the world of biography. An assessment of the art of Life Writing in England and the United States, reveals that there has been a shift in the market for biography. There are a several reasons for this. I will provide a few options to explain this change, supported by sales figures for publications classified as biography. It will be demonstrated that the genre biography could benefit from more self-awareness. While for some, the genre biography comes under Life Writing, I embrace the position that biography as a research area belongs to history. The literary form is all too often used as camouflage, as an excuse for not doing serious research. For that reason many authors of non-fiction texts embrace the label 'literary'; 'This biography reads as a novel.' This flirtation of biographers with the literary style is by no means reciprocal.

HANS RENDERS holds the chair of History and Theory of Biography and is director of the Biography Institute at Groningen University, Netherlands. He is chair of the national digital Biographical Portal and book reviewer for the papers *Het Parool* and *Historisch Nieuwsblad*. His publications on theory and biography include *Theoretical Approaches to Biography* (Brill, Boston/Leiden 2014) and *The Biographical Turn, Lives in History* (with Binne de Haan and Jonne Harmsma, Routledge, London/New York 2017). He has published full length biographies of poet and writer Jan Hanlo (1998), and journalist Jan Campert (2004); and is now working (in collaboration with Sjoerd van Faassen) on a biography of the artist Theo van Doesburg. <http://www.rug.nl/research/biografie-instituut>

* NOTE: In 2019 the workshop start time is 11:00am