

GEOGRAPHERS BIOBIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Geographers Biobibliographical Studies (GBS) is an annual serial publication devoted to critical assessment of the lives and works of geographers from all periods, nations and geographical constituencies. First published in 1977, *GBS* is now in its twenty-eighth volume (in 2009) and has provided detailed studies of over 420 geographical scholars from over twenty different countries. At a time of widespread and critical interdisciplinary engagement in biography and in biographical writing as a scholarly genre, and when work within the history of geography and of geographers has made important methodological and substantive connections with the history of science, with the history of cartography and with the humanities, *GBS* is the only publication devoted to the assessment of scholar's contributions to geography and to geographical knowledge in international context. *Geographers Biobibliographical Studies* is published by the Continuum International Publishing Group and on behalf of the IGU Commission for the History of Geography.

The most recent volume of *Geographers* (*GBS* 28, 2009) has essays on the early modern English geographer and churchman Peter Heyleyn (1599-1662), on the Danish political geographer Gudmund Hatt (1884-1960), the Hungarian regional and political geographer Tibor Mendöl (1905-1966), Koji Iizuka (1906-1970) the Japanese economic and political geographer, on the leading geomorphologist Richard ('Dick') Chorley (1927-2002), and on J. W. Karl Oestreich (1873-1947), also a geomorphologist, together with studies of Chartles Patrick Daly (1816-1899), the founder of the American Geographical Society, Marion Isabel Newbigin (1869-1968), editor of the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* for nearly thirty-five years, on the French urban and political geographer Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier (1917-1995), and

on the Scots-born explorer of western Africa, Captain Hugh Clapperton (1788-1827). Forthcoming essays include studies of the medical geographer Andrew Learmonth, French explorer Aimé Bonpland, on Denis Cosgrove and, from physical geography, on Luna B. Leopold and John Thornes.

Extending the range and coverage of Geographers Biobibliographical Studies

There are, of course, many geographers whose lives and works have not been the subject of study in *GBS* (a full list of those people already studied appears on the Commission's webpages at <http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGHIG/02Commissions/commission.html>). Because the coverage is still incomplete and because the coverage is also in several respects 'uneven', we are always keen to receive suggestions for intending contributions, to broaden coverage from different geographical constituencies and to make connections with other biographical studies of geographers in other contexts. Here, it is appropriate to summarise some of the remarks we offered in an earlier *GBS* editorial introduction: H. Lorimer and C. W. J. Withers (2007) 'Geographers: Lives, Works, Possibilities' *GBS* 26, 1-5. Simply, there are too few studies of women geographers: with the two essays in *GBS* 28 (2009), the total for women geographers is now only nine. This is a very poor reflection of women's place in the making of geography. Coverage overall within *GBS* is heavily skewed toward Anglo-American geography and geographers, and, within Europe, to France and to Germany. This, too, is an inadequate reflection of geography's internationalisation and of the subject's traditions in its many national contexts. And coverage tends to privilege the later nineteenth century and the twentieth century. This is in one sense a proper reflection of the subject's institutionalisation and its formalisation within universities and other such bodies for that is when departments

tended to be founded and research agenda laid out. But in another sense, this overlooks the important presence and activities not only of geographers working ‘outside’ and before the subject’s educational dimensions, but acts also to marginalise those many contributions made to geographical knowledge by persons who, although they did not profess the title ‘geographer’, nevertheless made major contributions to geographical understanding of the globe.

Our point is not that we suppose there to be fixed definitions of geography or of geographers. It is the reverse: we know there are not such things as single definitions, or modes of practice, or standard biographical traditions or histories. The range of scholarship in different geographical traditions, encompassed in several ways by the work of the IGU Commission, demonstrates that geography has had in the past, and has now, vitally different traditions and that it has been part of the politics of knowledge in a whole series of ways. It is surely important if we do want to take seriously the many histories of geography and the many lives and works of geographers that these different perspectives are brought into scholarly view, that there are more studies of women geographers, further work on countries outside Europe and north America and more studies of the pre-foundational chronologies of geography as a taught subject in universities and other such institutions. For this to happen, and for *Geographers* to flourish, we need you to propose people as the subjects of study and to suggest possible authors for *GBS* essays.

Contributing to Geographers Biobibliographical Studies

We are always delighted to receive suggestions for essays in *GBS*. Although the essays will continue to be in English, we are committed as part of IGU policy to have abstracts in French. Essays need not follow the ‘standard’ format of ‘Education, Life

and Work’; ‘Scientific Ideas and Geographical Thought’; ‘Influence and Spread of Ideas’ since we recognise that there are different styles to biographical scholarship and we are committed to developing those. Pictures other than the portrait are encouraged where they add to the dimensions of the essays. *Geographers* is not, then a fixed resource so much as a space for the continuing critical treatment of geography’s many histories and to critical acknowledgement of the lives and works of its myriad practitioners. If you’re interested in writing an essay, or want to know more of the GBS series, please get in touch with one of the co-editors below.

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