



G. Thomas Tanselle. *Portraits & Reviews*. Charlottesville: The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 2015. 485p. ISBN 9781883631161. \$55.00.

Many years ago, as I sat in my first bibliography class taught by Donald Krummel at the University of Illinois, I skimmed the semester's assigned reading and a few familiar names caught my eye: Fredson Bowers, Philip Gaskell, D. F. McKenzie. However, another name really grabbed hold of my curiosity: G. Thomas Tanselle. Not from recognizing his name, but because of the sheer volume of articles listed on the syllabus. I was intrigued. The bibliography offered a window into the lives of book collectors, booksellers, and authors. After reading a number of these intimate portraits, I was hooked.

In *Portraits & Reviews*, Tanselle brings together a sampling of some of the biographical sketches and reviews that he wrote between 1959 and 2015. Split into two parts, the first section features portraits, and the second features reviews. The book is organized chronologically to reflect when the piece was first published (with the exception of one new entry - Floyd Dell). Tanselle admits that he has chosen these selections based on his personal interests, providing us with yet another intimate snapshot of his career.

In his preface, Tanselle notes that he chose the two genres for their concentration on the biographical aspects of the subject, and that "taken together, they show how a biographical approach can serve to characterize a whole field - in this case, the world of books and bibliographical and textual scholarship (xi)." Because the various writings were published over years in a range of journals, a reader doesn't always have the full context but aggregates the pieces into a history shaped by "life stories and critical assessments."

The 28 portraits comprise narratives of, or tributes to, collectors, booksellers, librarians, scholarly editors, bibliographers, publishers, authors, literary and historical scholars. While they all capture the personality of the individual, some of these portraits are reminiscent of obituaries that survey a lifespan, while others have a more singular focus on a subject. Figures represented include Sue Allen, Fredson Bowers, John Carter, Floyd Dell, Nancy Hale, Harrison Horblit, Vera Lawrence, Ruth Mortimer, Gordon Ray, and William Scheide among many others.



The *Reviews* section consists of 42 pieces, mostly book reviews, but also some responses to essays, introductions to anthologies, and retrospective assessments. Among these are discussions of bibliographical classics by Philip Gaskell, D.F. McKenzie, Paul Needham, Allan Stevenson, and David Vander Meulen, as well as reviews of works by other major scholars such as Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, Anthony Grafton, and David McKitterick. Also discussed are books by Nicholson Baker, William A. Jackson, Larry McMurtry, and Joseph Viscomi, plus several bibliographies, bibliographical reference works, books on book collecting, and scholarly editions.

In reading these personalized snapshots, there is no doubt that Tanselle thoroughly enjoyed his work. Academic libraries that focus on the book and scholars in bibliographical and related fields will find this a strong addition to their collections. For those of us working in the discipline, it is a reminder of the groundbreaking work done by many before us; and for up-and-coming scholars, it offers an intimate look at some of the most important people who committed themselves to advancing the field of bibliography and who helped to shape this scholarly genre.

Ethan A. Henderson
Georgetown University