

Biographical Dictionary of North American Classicists (Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1994), 393-394

MAGIE, David. Born: 20 Jan. 1877, New York, NY, to David, a physician, & Margaret Sarah McCosh M. Education: A.B. Princeton, 1897; A.M., 1899; Ph.D. Halle, 1904. Prof. Exp.: Tchr. Lawrenceville Sch., 1898-9; instr. Lat. Princeton, 1899-1905; preceptor class., 1905-11; prof. 1911-30; mem. Second Princeton Arch. Exped. to Syria, 1909; staff, Depts. of Justice & State, 1917-8; Am. Mission to Negotiate Peace, 1919; Goodwin Award, 1951. Died: 22 Apr. 1960, Princeton, NJ.

David Magie was a quintessential product of 19th and early 20th-century Princeton. His father and other relatives were Princeton graduates, his grandfather, James McCosh, was the university's 11th president, while he himself was associated with the university as undergraduate, graduate student, and faculty member for over 50 years. He taught for a year at a nearby private school, pursued his doctoral work at a German university, as a "preceptor" was part of Woodrow Wilson's educational innovations at Princeton, joined the Princeton expedition to Syria, followed Wilson to Paris in 1919, and, as a wealthy man, was able to retire from active teaching in 1930, at the age of 53, to devote himself to research. A tall, erect, deeply reserved figure, renowned for his erudition and the clarity of his thinking, he won a reputation as a distinguished and committed teacher, especially among upperclassmen and graduate students. His devotion to Princeton, expressed with generous gifts through his lifetime, lives on in his testamentary endowment of the Magie Chair in Greek and Roman History.

Intellectually, however, his greatest debt was clearly to German *Wissenschaft*, particularly as incarnated at the Halle of Dittenberger, Ihm, E. Meyer, Robert, and Wilcken, and of his supervisor Wissowa. This can be seen in the three works for which he is remembered today. His doctoral dissertation was a survey of how the Greeks wrestled with the official terms of Roman public and sacred law. His translation, with considerable annotation, of the *Historia Augusta* is outstanding among the early Loeb's for its scholarship and its clear-eyed presentation of the controversy over the date and authorship of that work: few scholars outside Germany at the time knew or cared about a subject which has grown into a minor industry since Magie's day. His life's work, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, is his monument, 700 pages of text buttressed by almost 900 of notes. Primarily

a narrative of Rome's involvement in Anatolia over five centuries, with a strong interest in the geography of the region, written with exceptional elegance and based on massive reading, it remains a standard work. In the course of time *RRAM* has been built on or superseded, as have Magie's two earlier books, and none of them is notable for its originality, yet all three share a lasting quality that is no mean achievement: they are still turned to for introductions to their subjects which are clear, honest, learned, and independent.

DISSERTATION: "De Romanorum iuris publici sacrique vocabulis sollemnibus in Graecum sermonem conversis. Pars prior" (Halle, 1904); printed complete (Leipzig, 1905).

PUBLICATIONS: "Augustus' War in Spain (26-25 B.C.)," *CP* 15 (1920) 323-39; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (trans.), LCL, 3 vols. (some done by A. O'Brien-Moore) (Cambridge & London, 1921-32); "Roman Policy in Armenia and Transcaucasia and its Significance," *AHA Ann. Report 1910* (Washington, 1923) 295-304; *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1950).

SOURCES: *NatCAB* 48:343-5; *NYTimes* (24 Apr. 1960) 88; Princeton University Archives; *WhAm* 5:453.

Edward Champlin