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In memoriam Craig Kallendorf (1954-2023)

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In memoriam

Craig Kallendorf (1954–2023)

It is with great sadness that the world of Neo-Latin studies has learned of the passing away of Craig Kallendorf, Professor in the Department of English at Texas A&M University, which he joined after the completion of his PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1982 and to which he remained attached ever since. This institutional *stabilitas loci* contrasts with Craig's omnipresence in the international *res publica litterarum*: he traveled regularly to libraries, attended many conferences and workshops and other kinds of academic occasions all over the world – always with the same cheerful presence and kindness that he showed to everyone who had the pleasure of meeting him.

Craig Kallendorf was an immensely prolific scholar. The festschrift *Habent sua fata libelli. Studies in Book History, the Classical Tradition, and Humanism in Honor of Craig Kallendorf*, edited by Steven Oberhelman, Giancarlo Abbamonte, and Patrick Baker (Leiden / Boston, 2022) counts “26 monographs, editions, translations, and textbooks, as well as over 65 articles and book chapters (not to mention innumerable reference entries)” (p. 1). Among those, his life-long studies of Virgil's ‘Nachleben’, both via literary imitation and in its materiality (in the form of printed editions and commentaries), deserve pride of place. They span more than 30 years, from 1989, when Craig analyzed rhetorical reading strategies with regard to the *Aeneid* from Francesco Petrarca to Cristoforo Landino in his monograph *In Praise of Aeneas. Virgil and Epideictic Rhetoric in the Early Italian Renaissance* (Hanover / London), to 2020, which saw the publication of the relatively slim but extremely condensed overview of Virgil's printing history in *Printing Virgil. The Transformation of the Classics in the Renaissance* (Leiden / Boston). This latter book is a kind of preliminary version of the Virgilian entry in the *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum* on which Craig had been working for many years and of which he sadly could not witness the publication. His most controversial monograph was probably *The Other Virgil. ‘Pessimistic’ Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford 2007). Even if he will not have convinced every reader that the pessimistic second voice (and further voices) that have been postulated by the ‘Harvard school’ had a prehistory in the Renaissance, his analyses of Latin, Spanish and English epic texts (by among others Filelfo, Milton, Shakespeare and Juana Inés de la Cruz) are lucid and thought-provoking proof of his learning and inventiveness. His second Oxford monograph, on the other hand, *The Protean Virgil. Material Form and the Reception of the Classics* (Oxford 2015), sets a methodologically brilliant example of how complex it is to pursue material-based reception history in the sense he understood it: it comprises the study of manuscripts, printed editions, commentaries, and

illustrations and even includes the transformation of Virgil's text into the digital era. Craig was convinced that in order to get a true overview of Virgil's (or, in fact, any author's) reception history, one needs to see as many books as possible in as many versions as possible, which includes studying not only the printing history of an author's entire work, but also individual and collective readers' responses, both in the form of personal annotations and in printed commentaries. This kind of study requires diligence, overview, patience and endless curiosity – all virtues that Craig possessed in the highest degree. How groundbreaking his research in the field of the Virgilian tradition has been can also be witnessed from the fact that his collected articles in that field were brought together twice in variorum collections: *The Virgilian Tradition. Book History and the History of Reading in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot / Burlington, 2007) and *The Virgilian Tradition II. Books and Their Readers in the Renaissance* (London / New York, 2022).

Craig was keen on promoting a better theoretical foundation of the study of Neo-Latin. As president of the International Association of Neo-Latin Studies, he used his Presidential Address to make a call for critical awareness of adequate methodology: “How do we define the object of our studies? What methods are suitable? How have scholars acted until now, and how should we act in the future?” And in a programmatic review article of 2016 (Recent Trends in Neo-Latin Studies, in: *Classical Quarterly* 69 [2016], 617–629), he surveyed new approaches he considered worthwhile. Yet this open-minded interest in new research methods and theoretical approaches never favoured theory for theory's sake. In his first monograph (*In Praise of Aeneas* [see p. 5], 166), he wrote that “[t]he great danger with any theoretical approach to literature, it seems to me, is that it tends to ultimately become reductive.” This quotation characterizes his belief that theory should be chosen according to the needs of the texts, not superimposed on them, and should be applied with taste and without ideological bias.

Many readers will know Craig Kallendorf's name also from two other successful publications: the *Companion to the Classical Tradition* (Malden, Mass. etc., 2010) and the edition of four *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002) that he produced for the then still young I Tatti Renaissance Library series (including Pier Paolo Vergerio's *The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth*, Leonardo Bruni's *The Study of Literature*, Enea Silvio Piccolomini's *The Education of Boys* and Battista Guarino's *A Program of Teaching and Learning*). Furthermore, as Richard Thomas has pointed out (in *Habent sua fata libelli* [see p. 5], 12), the intellectual generosity of Craig Kallendorf shows itself in the fact that he published no fewer than four bibliographies: the annotated *Latin Influences on English Literature from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century* (1982), *A Bibliography of*

Venetian Editions of Virgil, 1470–1599 (1991), *A Bibliography of Renaissance Italian Translations of Virgil* (1994), and the *Bibliography of the Early Printed Editions of Virgil 1469–1850* (2012). His role as an author of several substantial entries on humanism and humanists for the digital Oxford Bibliographies deserves special mention. Another major service to the field was his role as a long-standing editor of *Neo-Latin News*, to which he also contributed a sheer endless amount of book reviews (in addition to the ones he wrote for other journals such as *Renaissance Quarterly*).

Craig Kallendorf also was an active member of many organizations and societies. He was elected by the International Association for Neo-Latin Studies (IANLS) as its First Vice-President from 2009 until 2012 and as President between 2012 and 2015. For the Renaissance Society of America (RSA), he served as representative to the Council since 1991, as the editor of text and reprint series (since 2011), and as a member of the Executive Board (2009–2015). But even more importantly, he was a very generous colleague and friend to many scholars all over the world: he regularly opened his private library to those who needed it and was willing to offer advice and constructive criticism. Moreover, he always showed a lively interest in the person he was in contact with, also and especially with regard to early-career researchers, for whom his advice and encouragement could make all the difference. Similarly, his qualities as a teacher were famous: he taught with deep knowledge and enthusiasm for his subject matter and huge respect for anyone who wanted to learn more about it.

For some years Craig had known that he was seriously ill. He coped with this news in an admirably calm and determined way. Richard Thomas' overview of Craig's life and work in the 2022 festschrift *Habent sua fata libelli* [see p. 5], a warm eulogy for a friend which shortly after its appearance turned into a touching and immensely commendable 'in memoriam', ends with an email written by Craig in which he announces his illness, but nonetheless expresses his belief that "All is well, really". Many colleagues have received similarly comforting emails by Craig in recent years. His faith, his books, his Virgil, his many friends and above all his family were a source of comfort to him – the dedication to his son in the volume of *Humanist Educational Treatises* [see p. 6] is a touching proof of that. As long as he possibly could, he continued to work on his projects, also as a way of keeping his head up and showing the world that he was determined to withstand fate.

During the tough times of the COVID crisis, the Renaissance Society of America proposed two special sessions in his honour during the Dublin conference of 2021. Some of the most distinguished scholars in the field gladly contributed to these sessions (some of the papers that were delivered on this occasion ended up in the aforementioned festschrift) and many more came to participate as

audience. Craig was visibly touched by the event – the digital format of the conference allowed him to join from his home and to deliver a brief speech with words of gratitude at the end of the session. But it should really be *us* to thank *him* for all he has done for the field of Neo-Latin studies. The combination of painstaking philological acumen, methodological open-mindedness and interpretational creativity characterizes Craig Kallendorf's oeuvre, which will remain a rich treasure trove of knowledge, a sprinkling source of inspiration and a fine example of academic virtue for many scholars and many, many years to come.

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