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OBITUARIES

Klaus Bringmann

1936–2021

On July 14th, 2021, a few weeks after his 85th birthday, Prof. Dr. (emeritus) Klaus Bringmann, one of the leading scholars of Classical Antiquity of our age, passed away.

He was born on May 28th, 1936, in Bad Wildungen, the only son of a bank official and a housewife. This is a small town in the northern part of the Federal State of Hesse in Germany. Due to its remote location from the traditional industrial and commercial centers of Germany, this town remained undamaged during the Second World War. Although being a child then, he remembered very well the hardships of the War and its aftermath. At the local *Gymnasium* he met his future wife, Renate nee Sölzer. Later on (1965) they married, and had three sons.

In 1956 he began his academic studies at the University of Marburg/Lahn in ancient history, classical philology and philosophy. As reported by the Wikipedia in German, he studied there until 1960 under a well-known scholar of classical antiquity, Fritz Taeger (1894–1960). After the latter's death, he was succeeded by Karl Christ (1923–2008), the founder of the study of the modern research of ancient history (*Wissenschaftsgeschichte*). In addition, he continued his studies at the University of Munich.

At the University of Marburg he submitted his first two academic publications: His *Promotionsschrift* of 1962 “*Studien zu den politischen Ideen des Isokrates*”, dedicated to Greek history, appeared in 1965 in Göttingen (*Hypomnemata*, vol. 14). Six years later (1971), he published the *Habilitationschrift* of 1969 “*Untersuchungen zum späten Cicero*” (*Hypomnemata*, vol. 29), devoted this time to Roman history.

In that year, he was appointed Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Marburg for the years 1971–1972. In 1973 he moved to the parallel scholarly discipline, and became Professor of Ancient History at the *Technische Hochschule* in Darmstadt. In 1981 he was nominated an *Ordinarius* in Ancient History at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt/Main. His term of service there (1981–2000) turned out indeed to be prosperous in several aspects. In the academic sphere, he was twice elected as Dean of the *Fachbereich Geschichtswissenschaften* (1985–1986, 1991–1992). Aside from that, his outstanding teaching ability enabled him to revive the distant past in a lively and most interesting manner in his lectures to the public (cf. Uwe Walter's *Nachruf* in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 19.07.2021, and Clemens Heucke at the site of the WBG-Darmstadt). Due to his numerous historical and archaeological studies of classical antiquity, between 1987 and 2002 he served as a member of the *Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* (DAI) in Munich. In 1988 he was elected an ordinary member of the DAI. In the meantime, he earned international fame through his publications, and for 1987–1988 was invited as a Visiting Member by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, USA. A second stay there followed in 1993–1994. Finally, in 2000, after those fruitful years, he retired from his academic duties (cf. his *Werdegang* at the site of the *Historisches Seminar* of that University), but carried on vigorously his writing and research.

As noted by Hartmut Leppin, his former colleague at the same University, in his writings, Bringmann combined two academic disciplines (see Leppin's *Nachruf*, *ibid*): Classical Philology (*Klassische Philologie*) and Ancient History (*Alte Geschichte*). As previously indicated, this uncommon combination enabled him already at the outset of his academic career to move within a year (1972) from one discipline to the other.

As Leppin argues, Bringmann's many works focused on the following four chapters of Greek and Roman history. Yet, for reasons of space, just a few of the highlights of his vast scholarship are referred to below. (A full list of his publications and their translation into other languages is not yet available):

a) History of the Late Roman Republic and the Early Principate:

His biographies of Augustus (2007) and Cicero (2014).

b) History and Culture of the Hellenistic World.

The epigraphic project (with colleagues): "*Schenkungen hellenistischer Herrscher an griechische Städte und Heiligtümer*" (The first volume was published in 1995. The second volume, in two parts, followed in 2000).

c) History of the Jews in the Great Empires of the Ancient World.

Jewish history in antiquity always attracted his attention. In 2005 he published "*Geschichte der Juden im Altertum, Vom babylonischen Exil bis zur arabischen Eroberung*" (538 BC to 640 AD), which covers more than a thousand years of Jewish history.

d) Early Christianity.

"*Kaiser Julian*", a biography of the last pagan emperor (2004).

For nearly thirty-two years (1989–2021), I have had both the honor and privilege to be in regular touch with him. During those years, I was able to benefit from his kindness, generosity, scholarship, life experience and friendly guidance, for all of which I shall always remain most grateful.

Yitzhak Dana