

IN MEMORIAM

John H. Randall, Jr.

JOHAN H. Randall, Jr., Frederick J. E. Woodbridge Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Columbia University, died in New York on December 1, 1980. He was a corresponding member of the Committee on Renaissance Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies from 1939 to 1943, one of the founders of the Columbia University Seminar on Renaissance Studies in 1945 and its chairman from 1948 to 1962, and one of the founders and organizers of the Renaissance Society of America in 1954. He served as its first President from 1954 to 1957, and as a member of its Executive Board and Chairman for New Projects and Activities from 1957 to 1974. He took an active part in the affairs of the society and in its editorial enterprises for many years.

Randall was widely known and respected as a philosopher who described himself as a naturalist and who felt indebted in his thought to his teachers John Dewey and Frederick Woodbridge, and above all to Aristotle. He was also a learned and original historian of Western philosophy and thought and covered its entire range from the Greeks to this century in his lectures and seminars at Columbia, in his books, and in his activity as one of the founders and editors of the *Journal of the History of Ideas*. He had a special and strong interest in Renaissance philosophy and was very well versed in it. In all of his writings, and especially in his *Making of the Modern Mind* (1926) and in his *Career of Philosophy* (2 vols., 1962–65), he stressed the importance of Renaissance philosophy both in the general history of Western thought and in the context of Renaissance civilization. His noteworthy contributions to the field include his part in several cooperative enterprises, especially a bibliographical survey of Renaissance philosophy ("The Study of the Philosophies of the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2, 1941, 449–496) and a volume of annotated translations of important philosophical texts from the early Renaissance (*Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, edited jointly with Ernst Cassirer and Paul Oskar Kristeller, Chicago, 1948).

Randall's special interest in Renaissance philosophy was focused on the Aristotelian tradition of the Italian universities, and especially of

Padua. Having studied many rare printed sources during a stay in Italy in 1933–34, Randall presented in a series of important articles, and later in his *Career of Philosophy*, the view that the Italian Aristotelian commentators from Peter of Abano to Jacopo Zabarella developed a theory of the scientific method that prepared the way for early modern natural science, as exemplified by Galileo, who taught for many years at Padua. Several substantial papers, among them “The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua” (*Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 [1940], 177–206) and his introduction to Pomponazzi’s treatise on the immortality of the soul, later entitled “The Place of Pomponazzi in the Padua Tradition” (in *Renaissance Philosophy of Man* [Chicago, 1948], 257–279) were later included in a small but important volume published in Padua in 1961 (*The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Science*). Randall’s assessment of Renaissance Aristotelianism, which went beyond the earlier efforts of Renan, Cassirer, and others, has been widely acclaimed and accepted and has greatly influenced the general interpretation of Renaissance thought in my own work and that of Eugenio Garin, as well as in the more specialized studies of younger scholars, many of them former students of Randall at Columbia, such as Neal Gilbert, William Edwards, Charles Schmitt, Edward Mahoney, and Herbert Matsen.

As an organizer, teacher, and scholar, Randall has made an important and lasting contribution to Renaissance studies, and especially to the study of Renaissance philosophy and of the Aristotelian tradition. He has opened up a field of investigation that will yield much additional information and insight to younger scholars.

Paul Oskar Kristeller

George Brunner Parks

AS scholar, editor, and teacher, George Brunner Parks deployed a multiplicity of interests in the field of Renaissance studies.

Chronologically and geographically these ranged from humanistic education in Italy to English voyages of exploration and discovery in the New World; topically, they extended from the religious and civic to the belletristic; and linguistically they took in the diffuse field of neo-Latin literature as well as that of the vernaculars. The education