

## †Albert Henrichs

ALBERT HENRICHs, Eliot Professor of Greek Literature at Harvard University, died on 16 April 2017. He was 74. Professor Henrichs was a towering scholar of ancient Greek literature and religion. A leading light in the field, he made lasting contributions to an impressive range of topics in Classics, in and out of the more traditional canon. Trained in Cologne under Reinhold Merkelbach, he began his career as a papyrologist and published a large number of editions and studies of textual criticism during his time in Cologne, Michigan, Berkeley, and his early years at Harvard. Particularly noteworthy were his editions of the Cologne Mani Codex (with Ludwig Koenen), a text that had a profound impact on our understanding of ancient Manichaeism, and of the fragments of Lollianos' *Phoinikika*, a lost novel, which opened a tantalizing window into a narrative of dark adventure. Henrichs' philological acumen was legendary. His deep and precise knowledge of the literary corpus, and his judicious balance of prudence and daring have immeasurably improved many texts over the years, both those he edited himself for *ZPE* and other journals, and those he revised for others throughout his long career.



† Albert Henrichs  
(© The Harvard Gazette)

His expertise spanned across numerous genres and periods, from Homer to Patristics and beyond. It notably included Attic tragedy, on which he made fundamental contributions. His work on the tragic chorus changed the course of scholarship on the topic, and he produced important research on dramatic representations of sacrifice. Religion was a guiding thread of his interest in ancient literature. He contributed influential, unfailingly original and prodigiously learned studies to countless aspects of scholarship on Greek polytheism, from ideas of human sacrifice to mythography, *hieroi logoi*, or hero cult. At a time when the study of Greek religion was largely shaped by schools and models, he followed his own inductive path through individual case studies, and his refreshing independence remained a precious and much-needed source

of new perspectives, as well as a permanent invitation to question previous certitudes.

At the heart of his approach was a conviction that a real command of historiography is needed to open genuinely new ground. A far-reaching and respectful engagement with previous scholarship is a key feature of much of his work, and several of his studies on the history of scholarship have become landmarks of their own.

Albert Henrichs placed the gods at the centre of his research on Greek religion, and he emphasized the very real and complex nature of their presence and power for the populations that honoured them. Beyond ritual practice and social dynamic, he invited his readers to take seriously the ancient experience of the divine, the theological rhetoric of its representation, and the imagination of polytheism. One god, Dionysus, particularly fascinated him for most of his life, and his inspired studies on Dionysus and the Dionysiac are recognized as a watershed in the study of ancient Greek religion and its receptions. All of his students will remember the powerful enthusiasm and the incisive vitality of his evocations of the gods in the classroom, and the privilege of listening to his many lessons and stories about what it means to make sense of their traces. He revelled in communicating the excitement and the danger of the encounter with the numinous.

Indeed, Albert Henrichs was a beloved teacher and a generous mentor, and he transmitted his irrepressible passion for ancient Greek literature and culture to generations of students over some fifty years of university teaching. Albert was a force of nature, larger than life, a man who lived the moment with contagious intensity. The intelligence of his warm humanity allowed him to know his interlocutors, and he used his talents to care for others. His death is a painful loss to many. He is survived by his wife, Sarah; two children from a first marriage, Markus and Helen; their mother, Ursula; and two grandchildren, Magdalena and Julian.

*Renaud Gagné*  
Faculty of Classics  
University of Cambridge

