

***In Memoriam* – Albrecht Neubert**

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In Memoriam – Albrecht Neubert

I woke up one morning this past June and wished I hadn't opened any of the emails I had received overnight. For waiting in the email queue was a message sent to me by long-time colleague Christina Schäffner informing me that our mutual friend and mentor, Professor Albrecht Neubert, had passed away on June 1.

As I read Christina's brief death notice posted on the website of KU Leuven's Centre for Translation Studies (CETRA) – where Professor Neubert had been CETRA Professor in 1992 – I realized that a listing of Albrecht Neubert's many achievements would let the world know what he had accomplished, but would, perhaps, reveal little about who he actually was.

His official history, his academic résumé, tells us that he was a founding figure in the development of Translation Studies in Germany and, as his influence spread, internationally. His early work, *Grundfragen der Übersetzungswissenschaft* [Fundamental Questions in Translation Studies] (1968), established his early interest in limning the outlines of our discipline. He joined with colleagues Otto Kade, Gert Jäger and Gerd Wotjak, to expand our notion of translation into the pragmatic and communicative spheres. Neubert, especially, was an early proponent of the “pragmatic turn” in Translation Studies – where pragmatic situation, text type and functional translation were brought together for the first time. As Juliane House (2016: 15) once said: “this is a very modern view; at the time it was truly innovative.”

Innovation was a hallmark of Albecht Neubert's career. Nowhere was this more evident than in his attempt to elaborate the role of the textual perspective in translation. The capstone of that endeavor, years in the making, was *Translation as Text*, which I had the honor of co-authoring with him.

One could elaborate at length about his multiple contributions to our discipline and to translator training, not just at the University of Leipzig, but also at Kent State University where he helped me establish one of America's most distinguished translation programs. But there is not nearly enough space to do so.

What is not in the official history is that he was a treasured friend, an extraordinary mentor, and a truly wise and witty man. My wife Joan and I had a long personal history with him that stretches back to 1985 when he hosted us – me just a callow young professor – in Leipzig. He and his wife Doris were our confidantes and travel companions. They knew our families and friends. They were willing babysitters for my children when the need arose. No one could amuse a small child on a long car trip like Albrecht.

He was for a space of years the epitome of scholarship, an unfailing role model, for those of us who had gathered around him in Leipzig to learn. To me, and to

Christina, Willi, Klaus, and many others of us who had the privilege to know him, he was a true giant – a scholar of the old school. It is enough to say that they don't really make men like him any more. I had a once in a lifetime opportunity to work with greatness. I appreciate it more than I can say. I miss him already.

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