

Curt F. Bühler

Curt Ferdinand Bühler, one of the most distinguished scholars of the last generation and a founder and former President of the Renaissance Society of America, died in New York on 2 August 1985. Born in New York on 11 July 1905, he was graduated from Yale University in 1927 and obtained his doctoral degree from Trinity College, Dublin in 1930. He received honorary degrees from Trinity College in 1947 and from Columbia University in 1980. After a period of post-doctoral work at the University of Munich (1931–33), Bühler joined the staff of the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1934 and was associated with that Library for the rest of his life, becoming Keeper of Printed Books in 1948, Research Fellow in 1967, and an Honorary Fellow after his retirement in 1973.

Bühler was an imaginative and productive scholar whose learning, which he generously shared with others, was both wide and precise. The center of his interest was the history of the book, both manuscript and printed, from the Middle Ages through the sixteenth century, but his contributions extended into many important areas of literary and cultural history. In addition to numerous articles, reviews, and exhibition catalogues, he published a number of important books, including *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1941), *The Bible: Manuscript and Printed Bibles from the Fourth to the Nineteenth Century* (1947), *The University and the Press in Fifteenth-Century Bologna* (1958), and *William Caxton and His Critics* (1960). His *The Fifteenth-Century Book: The Scribes, The Printers, The Decorators* (1960) is one of the most concise and reliable treatments of its subject. *Early Books and Manuscripts* (1973) is an impressive collection of some of his most important papers.

Curt Bühler was a Rosenbach Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania (1947–48 and 1958–59), a Guggenheim Fellow (1965–66 and 1977–78), and a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford (1969). He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1958), a Member of the American Philosophical Society (1967) and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy (1976). Among the many scholarly organizations he was affiliated with, he was especially active in the Medieval Academy of America, of which he was elected a fellow in 1956, and in the American Council of Learned Societies, serving as a member (1953–82), Secretary (1960–

74), and Chairman of its Board of Directors (1974–82), as well as its representative in the Union Académique Internationale. He was director of the Union Académique Internationale from 1968 to 1971.

Curt Bühler was a founder of the Renaissance Society and for many years took a leading part in its affairs. He was a member of its Executive Board (1954–73), its delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies (1959–62), and its President (1961–63). His good judgment and wise council helped to resolve many difficult scholarly and also practical problems. Though he was a rather quiet and reserved person, all who had the privilege of knowing him well were aware of his kindness and generosity, his sane judgment and delightful wit. His personal and intellectual integrity and his loyalty to the scholarly community will long be remembered.

Paul Oskar Kristeller