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†Pieter Johannes Sijpesteijn

With the death of Piet Sijpesteijn at the early age of 61, papyrology has lost a scholar of exceptional energy and productivity. To those who saw him still full of vitality and plans at the Berlin congress and even during his travels later in 1995, his rapid death on 28 May 1996 after the diagnosis of cancer in February remains a great shock.

Sijpesteijn was born in Rotterdam on 16 September 1934. After secondary education at the Gymnasium Augustinianum in Eindhoven and the Gymnasium Erasmianum of Rotterdam, he entered the Rijksuniversiteit Leiden in 1951. There he studied Greek and Latin languages and literature and ancient history, defending his doctoral dissertation on Vienna papyri in 1961 under the aegis of B. A. van Groningen. During the next six years he taught classics in the Gymnasia at Arnhem and Rotterdam (1961-1967), but in 1963 he began already to teach papyrology as a part-time assistant at the University of Amsterdam. In 1967 he began nearly three decades of full-time teaching in Amsterdam as lecturer in papyrology (1967-1980), then professor of papyrology (1980-1987), and finally professor of ancient history and ancillary disciplines (after the University failed to replace a retired professor of ancient history) until his retirement at the end of 1995.

The bare outlines of a curriculum vitae, however, give little sense of the man and his work. His early work in papyrology did not receive quite sufficient guidance from van Groningen, and the published version of the dissertation (*P. Vindob. Sijp.*, 1963) generated a large amount of critical comment. By that time, work on *P. Wisc. I* (1967), which he undertook in 1964, was well advanced. It, too, produced work for the critics. It is characteristic of the determination Sijpesteijn always displayed, and a great tribute to his realism, that these early reverses led him neither to give up scholarly work nor to continue without change, but instead to reeducate himself at the hands of Herbert Youtie, whom he first met in Cologne in 1965/6 when Youtie gave a series of lectures. Sijpesteijn's weekly visits to Cologne were also the beginning of a

lifelong friendship with Ludwig and Margret Koenen, with whom he stayed.

Sijpesteijn was later to spend time in Ann Arbor working more closely with Youtie, who had not only corrected mistakes in *P. Wisc. I* but written to point Sijpesteijn toward related texts available for editing (see *P. Theon.*, preface). From Youtie he learned much: Not only were the texts he edited thereafter of much higher quality, but he picked up the habit of reading the editions of others with a critical eye and writing notes about the texts. And, like Youtie, he spent his later years mainly writing short articles rather than working on larger projects. But before that time, starting in the mid-1970s (significantly just after his Ann Arbor stay of 1975), came the extraordinary stream of volumes of papyri and ostraka, edited sometimes alone and sometimes with collaborators, that built his scholarly reputation: *CPR V* (1976), *P. Theon.* (1976), *P. Vindob. Tandem* (1976), *O. Amst.* (1976), *P. Mich.* XIII (1977), *P. Wisc.* II (1977), *P. Herm. Landl.* (1978), *P. Amst.* I (1980), *O. Leid.* (1980), *MPER n.s.* XIII (1981), *P. Mich.* XV (1982), *CPR VIII* (1983), *P. Rain. Unterricht* (1985), *P. Harr.* II (1985), *P. Erasm.* I (1986), *T. Varie* (1989), *CPR XVIIIB* (1991), *O. Narmouthis I* (1993), *P. Pher.* (1993), *P. Pommersfelden* (1996). As his visibility grew, many students and visitors sought him out in Amsterdam and experienced his professional and personal generosity.

Editorial and critical work had coexisted with analytic scholarship based on the papyri from early in Sijpesteijn's career. His second book, published just a year after the dissertation, was the monograph on *Penthemeros-Certificates in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (*Pap. Lugd. Bat.* 12, 1964), still a standard work. It was characteristic of Sijpesteijn's career-long penchant for collecting and organizing material, particularly connected with offices and institutions, of which the largest example is *Customs Duties in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (1987), in which collection and classification are joined to the editing of texts. He also was the main force behind the creation of the series *Studia Amstelodamensia ad epigraphicam, ius antiquum, et papyrologicam pertinentia*, now at volume 36, in which much of his own work appeared.

Sijpesteijn the man, like his bibliography, was larger than life, the stuff of legends. Even his scholarly library was enormous, the envy of everyone who saw it. Some heard him recount how in his

youth he had run away from home and spent a year in French Foreign Legion paratroop training, but until age 50 could not visit France because he had deserted just before being sent from Algeria to Vietnam. Many, like me, will remember long, boisterous conversations over beers in his living-room or garden in Baarn. Whether happy or angry, his emotions were volcanic. He liked to travel and spent much time in Vienna and Ann Arbor, the two collections to which he devoted the most energy. His numerous visits to southern Greece, especially the Mani, were a great source of pleasure to him in his later years, and he spent part of his last months there. The packed church—and only a few of the crowd were papyrologists—at the memorial service in Baarn on 8 June bore witness to the impact Piet Sijpesteijn made on many people in his crowded years. The papyrologists will mark his passing, in conventional fashion but on an appropriately grandiose scale, with a volume of texts in his honor edited by Klaas Worp and Boudewijn Sirks, where it is hoped that a full bibliography will appear. Its long and distinguished list of contributors was presented to Piet shortly before his death and gave him much pleasure.

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