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To the memory of Ch. Snouck Hurgronje; Honorary member of the Academy of Sciences in the USSR

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KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

TO THE MEMORY OF CH. SNOUCK HURGRONJE,
honorary member of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.
(8 II 1857—26 VI 1936) *

Towards the end of the 19th century a new branch of science in the field of Oriental studies took a final shape and acquired an independent existence, namely Islamic studies, which gradually had freed itself from Arabic philology with which it had been closely connected. At that time two scholars, the Hungarian Ignace Goldziher and the Dutchman Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje held an authoritative position in this field and it is mainly due to their work that this science could develop in that period. To their very deaths they remained generally recognised authorities, not only in the field of Islamic studies, but to a considerable extent in the field of Western Oriental studies as well.

At an early age already Snouck had the opportunity to get acquainted with our country through its scholars. Naturally, V. R. Rozen (1849-1908), a close friend and contemporary of Goldziher, held the first place among these scholars. In the writings of the latter thirty letters from Snouck were found.¹

From these letters it appears that their friendship had been established even before the dissertation of Snouck, apparently in London, where they both had been working on manuscripts in the summer of 1879 (the letters from Snouck are of 16th and 26th July 1879).

* These are a few excerpts from an obituary of Professor Snouck Hurgronje, written by Professor I. J. Kračkovsky in 1937, and published for the first time in Vol. 5 of Kračkovsky's Selected Works (*Izbranyie sochineniya*, 5, 1957 p. 386-396). The main part of this obituary consists of biographical facts which contain little that is new to readers of the *Bijdragen*. In the final part, however, interesting information is given about personal contacts between Snouck Hurgronje and Russian and other scholars. The editors of the *Bijdragen* thought it worth while to publish this fragment, together with the short introduction to the obituary, in English translation.

The editors are grateful to Professor H. J. Benda of Yale University who drew their attention to this publication and who provided them with the text when this turned out not to be available in the Netherlands.

¹ These letters are kept in the Archives of the Academy of Sciences. See: I. J. Kračkovsky. Dopolnenie k bibliografii rabot barona V. R. Rozen i materialov o njom. ZKV, III, 1926, p. 277, no. 150.

He is deeply interested in the studies of Rozen, who at that time was concentrating on the study of Al-Dzjahiz, and in his turn shares with him his thoughts about his dissertation (this letter comes already from Leyden, as most of the following letters do, and dates from 7th April 1880).

He made the acquaintance of Goldziher much later, not until the congress of Orientalists which took place in Leyden in 1883; in a letter to Rozen he gives his first impression, which would remain unaltered during the rest of his life (28 XII 1883):

"Vorzüglich freute es mich Goldziher, mit dem ich bisher nur brieflich verkehrte, persönlich kennen zu lernen. Welch ein geistvoller Mann ist er und welch ein tiefer Verständnis hat er für die wichtigsten Probleme der Geschichte des Islam. Von seinem Ihnen dedicierten Zahiritenbuche habe ich die Aushängebogen gelesen und viel daraus gelernt."

During the eighties their correspondence was at its height: it gives information about a journey to Mekka (13 XI 1885) as well as problems concerning the Kazan editions on Moslem Law (8 VI 1886). In these letters names of Russian scholars or scholars, who were working in Russia often occur; with his characteristic causticity but quite deservedly Snouck discusses the works of Nofal' (1828-1902) (16 X 1886 and 3 VI 1887), takes interest in the biographic data about I. N. Berezin (1819-1896), about whom he had to write an article for some edition (8 VI 1886), he speaks with respect about I. E. Gotwald (1813-1897), whose Kazan editions he held in high esteem (5 VI 1888).

Apart from this we find in his letters an estimation of the works sent by Rozen (e.g. a description of a Bolognese collection of manuscripts (13 XI 1885)) and information about his own activities (8 VI 1886 and 2 V 1887). With the departure of Snouck to the Dutch East Indies, of which he informed Rozen beforehand (1 III 1889), their correspondence becomes less intensive; from the whole period that follows, we only have two letters. One of them (16 V 1892) gives a detailed report on the course of his studies in Batavia, the other (5 II 1898) was written on account of his receipt of the tenth volume of "Notes from the Eastern Department" and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the teaching activities of V. R. Rozen. Besides an interesting review of the most recent agitational writings of the Wahhabites and the last works of E. Sachau, this letter is very interesting by the peculiar way in which he expresses his misgivings about an increase of multilingualism in scientific literature. As usual, it is written in a

witty manner, not free from sarcasm and deserves to be quoted entirely, the more so as it has not lost its actuality to a certain extent even now:

“Zu meiner Freude erfuhr ich von Goldziher, dass ein Schüler von Ihnen Grosses verspricht auf islamitischem Gebiete.² Mit Hinblick auf die Erfüllung jener Prophezeiung und auf manches Andere habe ich mich in den letzten Monaten in einzelnen dem Schlafe entstohlenen Stunden mit den Elementen des Russischen befasst, denn Ihr Schüler wird zweifelsohne die jetzt mehr und mehr überhandnehmende Sitte verfolgen, seine wissenschaftlichen Ergebnisse dem begierigen Publikum in einer nicht allgemein verstandenen Sprache vorzulegen. Wir befinden uns in der Beziehung in Batavia im Rückschritte, denn ich habe eben vor Kurzem meine Collegen in der “Bataviaasch Genootschap” mit vieler Mühe überredet, fernerhin die meisten Publikationen unserer Gesellschaft französ., engl. oder deutsch erscheinen zu lassen. Die Zeit wird aber, wie ich fürchte, dennoch kommen, dass wir dem Zeitgeiste gemäss, in holländ. javan. malai. sundanesisch[er] atjehscher Sprache publicieren und dass der Studiosus in irgend einer Wissenschaft bevor er sich mit technischen Dingen abgibt, zuerst seine 24 Sprachen lernen muss.”

Although Snouck did not altogether master the Russian language, his knowledge of the characters and his ability to use a dictionary, if necessary, enabled him to get acquainted with the Russian works that interested him.

After his departure to Leyden, he usually applied for help to his colleagues, the Slavists of the University. Even after the death of Rozen, his connections with Russian scholars did not cease. A pupil of the latter, the Romanist D. K. Petrov (1872-1925), who worked for many years on an edition of the treatise of the well-known Arabo-Spanish writer Ibn Hazm, called “The dove’s necklace”, after the only Leyden manuscript, enjoyed his unceasing assistance during his frequent trips to Leyden, as well as during the printing of the book, which took place in the printing-house, famous among Arabists, of E. J. Brill.³

In 1913 Snouck had the occasion to make a direct acquaintance of Russia, when as a representative of the Amsterdam Academy of Sciences he took part in the International Congress of Academies in

² With this he means the correspondent-member of the Academy of Sc. Professor A. E. Schmidt (1871-1939).

³ This work was published in 1914: Abu Muhammed Ali ibn Hazm al Andalusi. *Tauk al-hamama* publié d’après l’unique manuscrit de la Bibliothèque de L’Université de Leide par D. K. Petrov. St. Petersburg-Leide, 1914.

Petersburg; his guide, who showed him the city and its surroundings, was the same D. K. Petrov.

My correspondence with Snouck Hurgronje started in 1912, when I published an article on some Arabic anthology in connection with a manuscript in the Leyden University Library.⁴

In the summer of 1914, during my stay in Holland, I had the opportunity to make the personal acquaintance of him and of Goldziher, who at that time was on vacation in a small seaside resort, Katwijk aan Zee.

The meetings and discussions with these two coryphaei of Islamic studies in Europe, who were at the height of their sparkling talents, stuck in my memory as the brightest impression of my scientific career. From that time on my correspondence with Snouck did not cease during the war, not even after the revolution; till the end of his life he continued being interested in our scientific work and the activities of the Academy, which he closely followed.

In his letter of the 10th of August 1933, when stating his impressions of the Russian translation of the "Dove's necklace" of Ibn Hazm, which had just been published, he also asked to make up for the omission of not sending him one of the numbers of the Academical "News".

During the war Snouck managed to remain loyal to true science, without making any political concessions. When at the beginning of the war in Russia a German Orientalist was interned under very hard conditions, Snouck spared no efforts to supply him with scientific literature, a fact which the latter remembered afterwards with gratitude.⁵ When in the same period a Russian Islamist needed a manuscript from the Tübingen Library, Snouck, thanks to his influence, managed to get hold of a photocopy of it, which seemed an almost impossible achievement in view of the circumstances of wartime.⁶

In 1924 Snouck was elected correspondent-member of our Academy, instead of the late I. Goldziher; he was elected Honorary-member in connection with his seventieth birthday, in the celebration of which the Academy took also part in 1927.

I. J. KRAČKOVSKY

⁴ I possess 17 letters of Snouck Hurgronje.

⁵ See: Th. Menzel. Über die Werke des Russischen Arabisten Kračkovsky. Archiv orientální, II, 1930, p. 54.

⁶ ZKV, V, 1930, p. 775, note 1.