PRUSSIA AND HOLLAND:
WILAMOWITZ AND TWO KUIPERS

BY

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I. Introduction

Between 1906 and 1914 there was a regular and usually cordial exchange of letters between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848-1931) and Koenraad Kuiper (1854-1922), a Dutch Hellenist who from 1898 until his death was professor of Greek at the University of Amsterdam. One of the by-products of this relationship was that Wilamowitz himself went to Holland for a lecture tour in March 1909; another that Kuiper’s son, Wolter E. J. Kuiper, after having taken his first degree in classics, went to Berlin from May to July 1909 in order to attend Wilamowitz’ lectures'). This young man—who would become his father’s successor—wrote a series of remarkably observant letters home which describe in a most lively way how Wilamowitz impressed him.

We have undertaken to publish these letters as we are convinced that they contain matter which is important for Wilamowitz’ biography, an enterprise to which the second editor has already given much attention. For the first editor it is also a welcome opportunity to shed light on two of his predecessors in the Amsterdam chair of Greek. From these two correspondences we print and annotate here: 1) in their entirety all 13 extant letters written by Wilamowitz to Kuiper sr²); 2) the parts of those written by Kuiper


2) It is well known that Wilamowitz preserved most of the many letters sent to him. But it seems that the letters of Kuiper sr. to him have been lost: see Schwester Hildegard von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in Antiqua 23 (Naples 1983), 7.
jr. which yield information on Wilamowitz. For the permission to publish these letters we thank Miss A. E. Kuiper, daughter of the late professor W. E. J. Kuiper. File (1) is kept in the archives of the Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen (KNAW); file (2) by Miss A. E. Kuiper herself.

II. The Thirteen New Texts

1. Wilamowitz' Dutch connection apparently began when he was elected in April 1906 honorary member of the Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen. Surely Kuiper had supported the election. This is the immediate background of the first letter:

Westend-Berlin, Eichenallee 12, 2.v.06
Hochgeehrter Herr College,

Gleichzeitig mit Ihrer freundlichen Nachricht erhielt ich die offizielle Ankündigung meiner Wahl durch Ihre Akademie und danke auch Ihnen persönlich aufrichtig für diese Ehre. Unsere Wissenschaft gedeiht nur durch die internationale Cooperation, und diese wieder bedarf der persönlichen Beziehungen. Wir haben hier jetzt den Professorenaustausch mit dem fernen Amerika; von dem verspreche ich mir wenig, aber unsere Studenten sollten wir mehr austauschen, und vielleicht, aber nicht für Gastrollen, auch die Docenten. Mir wird es eine Freude sein, wenn ich einmal wieder Holländern hier gefällig sein kann, und vielleicht führt mich

3) Actually it has been an old friend of the Kuiper family, Dr D. F. W. van Lennep, well-known for his edition of Euripides’ Alkestis (Leiden 1948), who has put us on the track; he showed to J. M. Bremer a copy of Wilamowitz’ astonishing letter of 30.viii.1914, and sent him on to Miss Kuiper. We thank Mr G. Muller for being our guide in the KNAW archives and helping us to get the data we needed.

4) For Wilamowitz’ emphasis on international cooperation among scholars see his Erinnerungen 1848-1914 (Leipzig 1929), 310 ff.

5) Notwithstanding this disparaging remark Wilamowitz did entertain contact with several American classicists. For a list of his American correspondents see Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Selected Correspondence 1869-1931, edited by William M. Calder III in Antiqua 23 (Naples 1983), 243 and for the German-American Exchange Program see Bernhard vom Brooke, Die deutsch-amerikanische Professorenaustausch: Preußische Wissenschaftspolitik, internationale Wissenschaftsbeziehungen und die Anfänge einer deutschen auswärtigen Kulturpolitik vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch 31 (1981), 128-182.