

EDITORIAL

This is no Festschrift. But if it were one, it would be in honour of the author of its first paper, Jørgen Raasted, dr. phil., Director of the Institute of Greek and Latin Medieval Philology (since 1986), Fellow of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, and possessor of several less official titles, such as D.D.B.F. (Dean of Danish Byzantinologists and Fragmentologists), O.M.I.G.L.M.M. (Only Member of IGLM who has been in the institute ever since the Mythical days of its foundation, which local legend places in 1958 — cf. CIMAGL 44), S.F.C.I.M.A.G.L. (Spiritual Father of CIMAGL), &c., &c.

On March 19, 1987, Jørgen Raasted turns sixty. The photo in this issue of CIMAGL is only a few years old. It depicts a bodily frame that is perfectly suitable to somebody who has gathered that many years and titles: this is the mature scholar, friendly, wise, and equipped with a sense of humour. The photo does not lie, but it tells less than half the truth. Raasted's publications, which are listed below, may supplement the picture. But to get a true impression of the man you have to speak with him. The oral medium was always his. In conversation he reveals his soul, and this has made him a fascinating colleague and a fascinating teacher, both to the high school children that he taught in the mid fifties and to the many university students that he has taught since 1958. The mind he reveals in conversation is an unusual one. It often seems to belong to a frisky boy of twelve summers much rather than to a sexagenarian. Teaching and research always took up most of his time. He always considered both a sort of playful game, and always engaged himself in the game with the earnest zeal of an eager child.

"I am a Bear of Very Little Brain" is one of Raasted's favourite ways of opening a conversation. A disarming approach to ordinary unimaginative people who fail to see that an empty jar of honey is anything but an empty jar of honey, whereas he shares with Winnie-the-Pooh the gift for seeing it as a Useful Pot to Keep Things in, a potential boat, and a lot more. He rarely dismisses anything as just trivial, dull, boring. Every-

thing is potentially interesting; you just have to view it under the right concept. This imaginative curiosity has made Raasted an ideal fragmentologist. A ragged piece of parchment with eighteen visible letters is not just that to him. Time and again he has transformed such miserable left-overs from the past into stories about how and why somebody wrote a book, how it was copied and why it was copied the way it was, how a particular copy was destroyed to be used for some new purpose and how it ended up in an organ pipe or wherever. Of course, some attempts to bring out the latent importance of a thing end in failure. As Pooh had to realize, a mysterious footprint is no sure sign that there is a wozzle at large. Raasted has hunted quite a few wozzles and heffalumps, but when you have several bright ideas a day you can afford to pursue some false trails. Anyhow, even when you catch no wozzles you learn a lot about them during the hunt.

Anyone who has attended Raasted's university courses has learned that research can be fun. Readers of this journal may know him primarily as an investigator of Byzantine music, a subject to which he was introduced in his student days by his revered teacher Carsten Høeg. But he has taught and done research on a broad variety of other subjects as well, most of them with some - be it ever so tenuous- connection to Greek, Latin or Christianity, the three subjects in which he graduated from the University of Copenhagen in the early fifties.

By lucky coincidence, Raasted's sixtieth birthday will be (almost) identical with the day on which this issue of CIMAGL is published. The coincidence is lucky because most of the papers deal with matters that have his particular interest. There are six papers on Byzantine culture, in fact the entire Danish contribution to the 17th International Byzantine Congress (Washington 1986). One of them is by the man who is beyond dispute the leading Byzantine scholar in this country, Jørgen Raasted himself. There is one paper on the New Testament. Though few of Raasted's own publications deal with the interpretation of theological texts, this is a subject on which he has spent much time. Then there are two papers on Latin manuscripts in Denmark. Codicology is a major interest

of Raasted's. In particular, he has put a vast amount of work into the cataloguing of medieval manuscript fragments preserved in Danish libraries and archives. The last paper of this issue falls outside the wide field of Raasted's interests. He never tried to understand medieval astronomy. Yet, there is a sense in which the paper owes its existence to him. For it was he who in 1969 realized the advantages of having an unpretentious journal like CIMAGL by means of which research done at or in collaboration with our institute might be speedily communicated to others.

By its contents and by its high number (54) this issue of CIMAGL bears witness to the vitality of some of Raasted's bright ideas. The staff of our institute invites all readers to join us in wishing many happy returns of the day to "the best bear in all the world."

Sten Ebbesen
Acting Editor



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