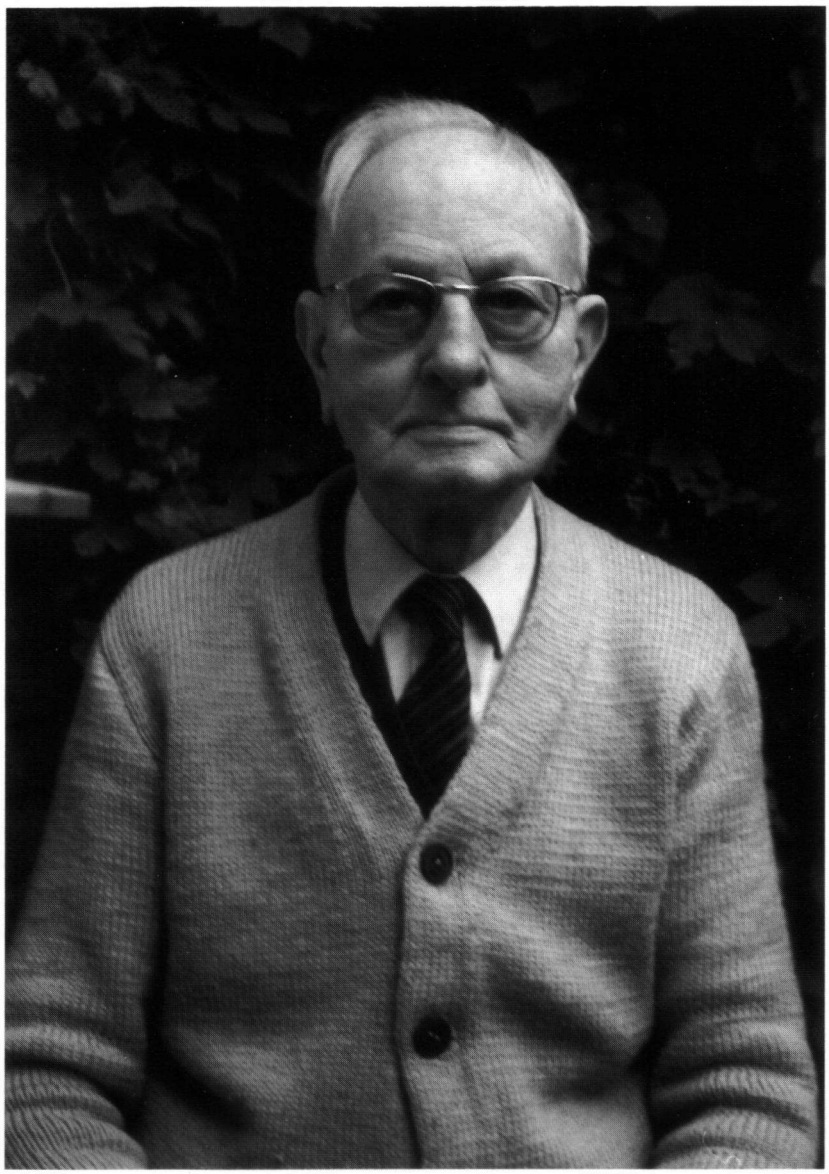

Professor Dr. Hermann Otto Sleumer
(Photograph Sept. 1990)

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IN MEMORIAM H. O. SLEUMER (1906–1993)

On October 1st, 1993 Professor Dr. Hermann Otto Sleumer died at the age of 87, after a short illness. His ashes have been interred at Liederbach (near Kirchberg), Germany.

Dr. Sleumer had been our colleague at the Rijksherbarium and eminent contributor to Flora Malesiana for many years. He generously shared his vast knowledge and experience with many of us. For younger botanists the many anecdotes and intimate stories he indulged in telling about colleagues he had known, especially from the Englerian circles in Berlin, were always an enriching and entertaining experience.

After his retirement in 1971 he remained attached to our institute as a most productive honorary staff member, who withdrew from active scientific research only about five years ago. The present obituary should be considered a supplement to the concise biography published on the occasion of his retirement in Blumea 19 (1971) 197–210 by Professor C.G.G.J. van Steenis, highlighting Sleumer's career and personality. Typical for Sleumer's conscientious nature, he left behind extensive notes on his activities following his retirement, so that writers of his obituary would have a light task and be minimally distracted from their main duties in plant taxonomy: revising plant families for floras or world monographs! We gratefully make extensive use of these notes here.

Sleumer came to Leiden in 1953 after a four year tenure in Argentina, for which he had left Berlin, foreseeing the poor prospects for systematic botany in post-war Germany. He earned his worldwide reputation foremost by his studies in Ericaceae, especially the genus *Rhododendron,* of which he introduced several species into horticulture, mainly from New Guinea. Other important families which will bear a lasting stamp of Sleumer's careful taxonomic delimitation are Escalloniaceae, Flacourtiaceae, Icacinaceae, Olacaceae, Myrsinaceae, and Proteaceae. Though strictly alpha-taxonomical in his own approeach he encouraged anatomists, cytologists and phytochemists to study the infra-familial relationships within these families. It was a great pleasure and privilege to work with him on such projects, and to be supported by his constant interest and never ending zeal to provide well-documented research material (if necessary from cleptotypes).

Sleumer was unrivalled in his production of numerous taxonomic papers, flora treatments and monographic revisions. He had a careful and pragmatic approach to the species concept, wisely keeping names provisionally as accepted, if evidence to the contrary appeared to be inadequate. This frequently led to differences of opinion with Van Steenis, under whose directorship he served most of his active years, and who favoured more radical degradation to synonymy in such cases of doubt.

The following paragraphs give a more detailed account of the last 21 years of Sleumer's active botanical career. As stated by Van Steenis in his biographical sketch, the professional activities of Sleumer have continued uninterrupted. After his retirement

in 1971 he was confronted with the fact that his manuscripts on about half the number of Flacourtiaceous genera, based mainly on Berlin specimens and revised between 1933 and 1941, had survived the destruction of the Berlin Museum in 1943, but had not yet been published. Thus Sleumer began to complete 15 of these revisions on African genera. Visits to the major herbaria in Europe enabled him to finish this work in about four years, backed by a WOTRO (Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research) subsidy for 1971–1974.

B.A. Krukoff, of the New York Botanical Garden, during a visit to the Rijksherbarium in 1974, asked him if he would be willing to write up the Flacourtiaceae for Flora Neotropica. Krukoff had been in contact with Sleumer on Amazonian Flacourtiaceae as early as 1934, and was well aware of Sleumer's unique knowledge of this pantropical family. They agreed that Sleumer would try to do the work within four years, backed financially by Krukoff for this period, which included visits to herbaria in Europe, the United States of America, and South America. In connection with this task Sleumer had been appointed 'B.A. Krukoff Curator of Amazonian Botany' at the New York Botanical Garden for the years 1976 and 1977. The manuscript was written between 1974 and 1978, and appeared in Flora Neotropica 22 (1980).

In 1978 Sleumer was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Rhododendron Society for his scientific work on *Rhododendron* since 1937, and for his eagerness to introduce tropical *Rhododendrons* into cultivation by collecting seeds and cuttings from wild *Rhododendrons* during his expeditions in the Philippines (Luzon), Borneo (Mt Kinebalu), and mainly New Guinea. Many of these species are still cultivated by amateurs along the North American Pacific Coast and in Botanical Gardens of, for instance, Bremen, Edinburgh, and San Francisco.

Having treated the Olacaceae for the 'Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien' as early as 1935, Sleumer kept a life-time interest in this still rather poorly known pantropical family, fascinating by its anatomical, taxonomical and plant-geographical aspects. Again it was B.A. Krukoff, who persuaded Sleumer to condense his knowledge into a revision of the family Olacaceae for Flora Neotropica. The African Olacaceae had already been revised by various authors, and thus Sleumer did the rest, starting with a revision of this family for Asia, Malesia,and the Pacific (1980), then delivering the version for Flora Malesiana (1984), and finally a revision for Flora Neotropica; the latter was ready in 1982, and published in 1984, shortly before Krukoff died.

In 1986 Sleumer received the Allerton Award of the Pacific Tropical Garden on Kauai (Hawaii) "for excellence in Tropical Botany" at the occasion of the Symposium for Tropical Botany in Zeist (The Netherlands) in the presence of numerous taxonomists from all over the world.

But still again there was something Sleumer would have liked to work on, and for which he had not found the necessary time in the years before. In Berlin, among numerous other plant families, he had to curate the Myrsinaceae, for which, after Mez' monograph in 1902, had been little interest among taxonomists. During his stay at the Miguel Lillo Institute at Tucuman (1949–1953) he had met members of this family for the first time in the field,which resulted in a publication on the species of *Rapanea* in Argentina, in which also Sleumer's opinion about the narrow species per-

ception of Mez was expressed. This old interest in the Myrsinaceae gave Sleumer the idea to concentrate his attention, besides on Ericaceae, also on Myrsinaceae during his expedition with P. van Royen in New Guinea (1961/1962). The result consisted of about 50 well annotated collections, with a high number of duplicates. It lasted more than 20 years before he could start to revise these, together with the numerous other collections of New Guinean Myrsinaceae which had accumulated since 1945 in the great herbaria, and which were almost completely represented in the Rijksherbarium. The work started in March 1984 with a revision of *Rapanea* in eastern Malesia, and was relatively quickly ready, to be published in 1986. Thus Sleumer decided to go on with the remaining genera of Myrsinaceae, except *Labisia,* which was at the time under revision by two other botanists, and the small genus *Aegiceras.* In the summer of 1988 the last six (of a total of ten) generical revisions appeared for the Moluccas, New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Solomon Islands, with keys to genera and species, and full documentation and descriptions of the 116 species left valid after revision. They form a considerable contribution to a future treatment of the family in Flora Malesiana.

Sleumer concluded his activities after 55 years in taxonomy, due to old-age shortcomings. He was an "extremely productive botanist" (Cowan & Stafleu, Taxonomic Literature), and is botanically remembered by the genus *Sleumerodendron* Virot, a Proteaceae from New Caledonia, and by 30 eponyms on species level in Phanerogams. Sleumer has described 13 new genera, and c. 1620 infrageneric taxa, new varieties, or new combinations in 32 different families of Phanerogams; of these, c. 140 taxa have been put into synonymy by now, mostly by Sleumer himself.

With the death of Sleumer, one of the last giants of a generation of great botanists has departed. Until his death he felt closely connected with our institute. He leaves us with a rich personal memory and a lasting botanical legacy. Our sympathy goes to his wife, children and grandchildren.

W.J.J.O. de Wilde & P. Baas

Eponymy

Apocynaceae: *Alyxia sleumeri* F. Markgraf — Araliaceae: *Polyscias sleumeri* W.R. Philipson — Begoniaceae: *Begonia sleumeri* L.B. Smith & Schubert — Celastraceae: *Nicobariodendron sleumeri* M.K. Vasudeva Rao & T. Chakrabarty — Clethraceae: *Clethra sleumeriana* Hao — Compositae: *Antennaria sleumeri* Cabrera — Cyperaceae: *Fimbristylis sleumeri* Kern — Ebenaceae: *Diospyros sleumeri* Kosterm. — Ericaceae: *Macleania sleumeriana* A.C. Smith; *Agapetes sleumerana* P.F. Stevens; *Agarista sleumeri* W.S. Judd; *Comarostaphylis sleumeri* Suesseng.; *Gaultheria sleumeri* T. Smitinand & Pham-hoang Ho; *Gaultheria sleumeriana* L.S. Kinoshita-Gouvea; *Rhododendron sleumeri* A. Gilli — Flacourtiaceae: *Xylosma sleumeri* Herter; *Euceraea sleumerana* Steyermark; *Homalium sleumeranum* M. Lescot — Lauraceae: *Cinnamomum sleumeri* Kosterm.; *Cryptocarya sleumeri* Kosterm.; *Endiandra sleumeri* Kosterm. — Malvaceae: *Nototriche sleumeri* Krapov. — Melastomataceae: *Catanthera sleumeri* M.P. Nayar — Monimiaceae: *Kibara sleumeri* W.R. Philipson — Monotropaceae: *Cheilotheca sleumerana* H. Keng — Olacaceae: *Heisteria sleumeri* Standley — Oleaceae: *Linociera sleumeri* C.T. White — Podocarpaceae: *Falcatifolium sleumeri* De Laubenfels — Solanaceae: *Solanum sleumeri* Correll — Verbenaceae: *Aloysis sleumeri* Moldenke.

Additions to the Bibliography 1932–1971

1958

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1971

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A taxonomic revision of the genus Scolopia Schreb. (Flacourtiaceae). – Blumea 20: 25–64.
A taxonomic revision of the genus Dasylepis Oliv. (Flacourtiaceae). – Bot. Jahrb. 92: 554–561.
Addenda: Ericaceae. – In: Flora Malesiana I, 6: 943.
Addenda: Flacourtiaceae. – In: Flora Malesiana I, 6: 943–944.
Addenda: Proteaceae. – In: Flora Malesiana I, 6: 965.
Clethraceae. – In: Flora de Venezuela 3 (1): 169–183.

1973

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Cardiopteridaceae. – In: Flora of Thailand 2 (2): 93–94.
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Révision du genre Homalium Jacq. (Flacourtiacées) en Afrique (y compris Madagascar et les Mascareignes). – Bull. Jard. Bot. Nat. Belgique 43: 239–328.

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Revision der Gattung Poggea Gürcke (Flacourtiaceae). – Bot. Jahrb. 94: 296–301.
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1977

Revision der Gattung Azara R. & P. (Flacourtiaceae). – Bot. Jahrb. 98: 151–175.

1978

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A revision of the genus Diogenesia. – Notes Roy. Bot. Gard. Edinburgh 36: 251–258.

1980

Note sur les Flacourtiacées des Mascareignes. – Adansonia sér. 2, 19: 495–496.
A taxonomic account of the Olacaceae of Asia, Malesia, and the adjacent areas. – Blumea 26: 145–168.
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Flacourtiaceae. – Bol. Soc. Argent. Bot. 23: 155–156.
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1986

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1987

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The genera Embelia Burm. f. and Grenacheria Mez (Myrsinaceae) in New Guinea. – Blumea 32: 385–396.

1988

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C.J.W. Lut