

A HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Studies in honour of 20 years *Analecta*
editorship by prof. dr. Corrie Bakels



50

ANALECTA
PRAEHISTORICA
LEIDENSIA

edited by

VICTOR KLINKENBERG, ROOS VAN OOSTEN
AND CAROL VAN DRIEL-MURRAY



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STUDIES IN HONOUR OF 20
YEARS ANALECTA EDITORSHIP
BY PROF. DR. CORRIE BAKELS

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PRAEHISTORICA
LEIDENSIA 50

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A life dedicated to science. Portrait of professor emerita Corrie Bakels, pioneer of paleoeconomy

Monique van den Dries and Harry Fokkens

INTRODUCTION

This 50th issue of the *Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia* marks the end of an era, as Corrie Bakels will step down after more than 35 years as editor-in-chief for the Faculty serial, passing on her title to the next generation. The current issue will therefore be a homage to this remarkable scientist. As part of this tribute, we seek to paint a picture of the face behind the *Analecta*'s; of an inspired editor who has been, and still is, of great importance to the archaeology and palynology of Leiden University. Corrie Bakels is an extraordinary multifaceted woman, a biologist by training who checked every biotope on our planet off her bucket list and whose portrait graces the Senate Chamber of the Leiden Academy Building. She is a scientist to the core, who describes herself as someone who likes to poke her nose into everything but always charts her own course. In every way.

It is a beautiful summer evening when we invite her for a pleasant meal in a casual homely setting, to look back on her rich and vibrant career during an almost three hour long participatory interview. We discuss how she became a pioneer in pollen analyses with only a crash course in palynology to start from, how she found her scientific niche in burnt macro remains from crop plants, and how she continues to search for and carve out new research paths. We also discuss her role as the first female professor in archaeology at the University of Leiden, and how this inspired others. We go on to talk about how her field of research is developing, and reflect on the past, present and future of the discipline, the education, the Faculty and the *Analecta*.

Monique van den Dries

Faculty of Archaeology
Leiden University
P.O. Box 9514
2300RA Leiden
The Netherlands

M.H.van.den.Dries@arch.leidenuniv.nl

Harry Fokkens

Faculty of Archaeology
Leiden University
P.O. Box 9514
2300RA Leiden
The Netherlands

H.Fokkens@arch.leidenuniv.nl

FROM POTABLE WATER CONDUITS TO AN ARCHAEOBOTANICAL NURSERY GARDEN

In the course of the past 50 years, you have seen a lot of advances occur in your field. What do you think is the most important development?

“I started in Leiden back in the day (in 1968) under professor Modderman, as a specialist for off-site archaeology. At the time, there was nothing of the kind in Leiden. I was a biologist. My professor was Modderman’s neighbor, and he told him I’d be a good fit. Modderman and I were already somewhat acquainted as I had attended his lectures in my free time and had gone along to the Linear Pottery Culture burial site dig to do the grunt work. I couldn’t believe my luck! I had graduated in sewer water purification and the preparation of potable water. For my first job, I’d inspected the subterranean network of pipes in the Hague, dressed in one of those white suits. I knew all about water conduits, but was

completely new to archaeology. I had to figure it all out on my own in that first year with Modderman, even the line of research I would pursue was entirely open and up to me. Nothing was handed to me. So, I started by doing an internship at the Dutch Geological Service. That's where I learned to bore and chart, in Southern Limburg and the Zak van Zuid-Beveland, as the first and only woman amongst the "coring-men", who, naturally, challenged me at every turn. After a very intensive three-week crash course in pollen analyses, under professor Van der Hammen in the biology group at Amsterdam University, I mastered the domain. What I didn't know yet at that time was how this could be used in environmental reconstructions. That knowledge came later, after the first field campaign with Modderman in Hienheim (Germany). That's where I first discovered charred plant remains from crop plants that could be determined (figure 1). In this project I envisioned how analyses of the landscape through botany and the insights it can give us on what people produced could be a compelling niche. Not a soul in Leiden was even considering this type of research at the time."

In the five decades that followed, Corrie saw her field of research grow exponentially. "We started very small with archaeobotany. At first, we were only doing research at the three Dutch universities [Leiden, the University of Amsterdam, and the University

of Groningen], but nowadays we see this type of study being integrated into archaeological research everywhere. Even in contract archaeology this trend is visible, with more and more companies hiring specialists specifically for this subfield. Many of these specialists were schooled in Leiden, all people whom I trained. Leiden was thus a bit of an academic nursery garden for archaeobotany. The field has now outgrown the universities and is widely applied, it has really become established. Archaeology can no longer shun archaeobotany without losing face. Every *Programma van Eisen* [the Dutch version of a written scheme of Investigations, a requirement of an archaeological excavation, ed.] of a development-led archaeological project now contains a section on archaeobotany. I consider this a great success."

"The drawback of this development is that the field is losing some of its scientific depth here and there. Meanwhile universities are focusing less on archaeobotany. They assume it is now being covered sufficiently elsewhere. Teaching in palynology at the universities is in a bit of a slump these days and should, in my opinion, be put on the red list. The general environmental aspects are still being taught, for example at the University of Amsterdam and in Leiden, notably reconstructions of Pleistocene swamp vegetations, but the focus is much less on what humans do to their environment."



Figure 1: Corrie Bakels in 1973 in Hienheim, seeking for charred plant remains in sediments (Photo: P.J.R. Modderman).

Is this a specific Dutch issue or a general European trend?

“These fluctuations depend on people and their research interests. It’s an ebb and flow everywhere. For instance, Leiden used to be the hotspot for Linear Pottery Culture research, but that disappeared when professor Modderman retired in the early nineteen eighties. In other countries, however, the interest in plant macro remains is only increasing, while pollen analysis remains a constant. There used to be only about 15 of us doing this type of research in the whole of Europe, now there are hundreds of specialists. And the man-woman ratio is, on average, relatively equal.”

OWN COURSE

The archaeological sciences have been repeatedly accused of ‘environmental determinism’. What is your stance in this debate?

“Environmental determinism did reign supreme for a while, but there was also a countermovement. In my perception the pendulum swung too far over to the other side at one point, when everything became social. I have never believed in determinism, either social or environmental. I believe both are part of the truth; humans can’t function without taking into account their environment, but that environment does not determine everything. Humans are always trying to manipulate their environment in a way that they think will improve it for them. This was the case for Neanderthals and continues to be the case for us today. The whole commotion and controversy around the climate crisis and the CO₂ debate can be understood from that perspective. Societies always try to adjust their surroundings to their advantage, and this is a constant I have observed throughout prehistory. In Mesolithic times this entailed the use of fire to increase hunting opportunities and harvest hazelnuts, but the later Neolithic crop farming and animal husbandry were of course also means of increasing control. Subsequently, people will start irrigation, fertilizing, etc. Humans never truly live completely in balance with nature. I don’t think that balance exists. And things will go wrong from time to time.”

“I’ve always chosen the middle ground in the whole nature/nurture debate, because I don’t like to take a pointed public stance. I always chart my own course, and that was looked upon favourably. Hodder once said that the only person he appreciated who

worked deductively rather than inductively, was Corrie Bakels.”

‘PEOPLE DON’T LIKE TREES’

Many societies in the past have dealt with both omni-present and rare natural resources. To what extent do you think is it possible to identify different approaches in the past to sustainable management of these resources?

In response to this question Corrie Bakels refers to how she sees humans; as opportunists who always want to change their environment to what they want it to be. “But of course, that never fully succeeds, and people often had no concept of sustainability. If we look for instance at the depletion of copper, gold, or silver veins, people simply mined them until they were gone, often without further consideration. In the times of the Linear Pottery Culture (5300-4900 BC) we can see the onset of human deforestation. I always say, “people don’t like trees”, because my pollen analyses keep showing how whenever humans arrive somewhere they start felling trees. Quite soon after, you can also observe the first signs of erosion. Whether this led to the disappearance of the Linear Pottery Culture people we cannot say. They started killing each other at a certain point, but why they did that... An environmental crisis is not observable, but the use of the surroundings was never truly balanced, and therefore, not sustainable.”

SCIENTIFIC GRANDCHILDREN

You have an impressively long service record. In what do you take the most pride in your own scientific career?

“In having trained so many people, and thus contributed to the growth of the research field. Not just in the Netherlands, but internationally as well. I have had a lot of PhD students, many of which abroad. There are lists somewhere, but the exact numbers escape me. The field has in any case been well developed. In France and Spain especially, where no one used to do any analyses of crop plant macro remains, I now encounter people who have been trained by scientists whom I trained, so who are in a certain sense my scientific grandchildren. That kind of thing feels very nice.”

When asked whether, in retrospect, there are things which she wished would have done differently, she answers concisely, with a resolute “NO! No, I would do it the exact same way again.”

CLOUD OF FIANCÉS

Which of your research projects has been the most fun, content-wise?

“I enjoy when a research project has a broad scope, concerning both topic and sources of information. I had a lot of fun doing my thesis on the Linear Pottery Culture and their environment. It concerned people, and what these pioneering farmers were doing with their surroundings. I always used a comprehensive approach for this type of research, because I’m a curious person and love poking my nose into things. I wanted to know what other specialists were doing, such as soil scientists, to see whether I could apply their knowledge. Of course, I could not master all those disciplines myself, so I engaged with people with specific specializations and asked them if they would be willing to do something for me. Nearly no one said no when I asked for something ‘weird’. Most people were willing to do things for me, which was cause for much amusement among my colleagues. Those specialists were usually men, so colleagues liked to talk about ‘Corrie and her cloud of fiancés.’”

“What I have learned, is that you have to take the beta-approach: you have to phrase your requests concisely, ask exactly what you want and avoid asking open questions. Those are the conditions if you want to get things done. Take for instance an article I am working on right now, on the shape of plough tracks and soil use, with different types of ards and the transition to the turn plough. I need materials for this project, such as sections of the soil traces, but archaeologists seldom make sections of plough tracks. The shape of them is never analyzed. At my request, Archol [the archaeological company affiliated with the Faculty of Archaeology, ed.] recently made a large number of pictures of plough tracks, hundreds of them, and other companies are now following suit! They did exactly what I asked of them, and *that* is exactly what’s so great.”

WEIRD LADY?

Most people think longingly of their retirement, but you still go to Faculty every day. What drives you and what do you still wish to do?

“I still enjoy my work, but I have to admit that I am very glad to no longer have the pressure of being obliged to do things, of deadlines. As retirement ap-



Figure 2: Corrie Bakels at work in Oss (Zevenbergen), 2007 (Photo: A. Louwen).

proached, I found giving lectures increasingly taxing. That’s something I stopped feeling the need to do.”

“I don’t have a bucket list; I just do things that appear on my path. Time and time again something will pop up and I will want to know more about it. That’s when I start thinking ‘how do I figure this out?’. That’s science, and that’s fun. That’s why I have persisted past my retirement (figure 2). At the moment I am greatly enjoying modelling the deposition context of the sword of Ommerschans. There is no pollen analysis involved, for this project I am looking at the hydrology by consulting maps from the Drents Overijsselse Delta Water Management company. From these maps, I can make a 3-dimensional model of the place of offering. I’m sending that model to a hydrologist, a specialist in Zürich, to see whether my hypothesis is correct. If you contact people with this kind of kooky question you always get an immediate response, everybody loves these things. It makes them think ‘who is this weird lady?’.”

ARCHAEOLOGY BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT

Current societal and political trends indicate that demonstrating societal relevance is a growing aim for the Faculty, both in education and in research (the so-called ‘third mission’). Do you think your specialism, (paleo-)ecology and botany, could play a crucial role in connecting the past with the present and the future? As it can elucidate the long-term impact of humanity and climate on the natural environment, it can help explain and possibly predict patterns.

“There is indeed an increasing demand for societal relevance. Take for instance the project in Rhenen-Elst, where Staatsbosbeheer [the Dutch State Forest Service, ed.] wants to know what the environment of the Bronze Age burial mounds would have looked like at the time. They want to recreate that setting. Why they want this is their concern, but the simple fact that they want it makes it ‘societally relevant’. One can ask oneself how this helps humanity, though.”

“When people ask me what value archaeologists add to our world, I always say that at the very least we provide entertainment. Look at how often archaeology is featured in the news, it appeals to people, they find it interesting. Our discipline falls under ‘bread and circuses’. In my opinion that also counts as ‘societal relevance’.”

Don’t you think we can use our knowledge of the past for the present?

“I wonder whether our knowledge of the past is useful for the present. History never fully repeats itself.”

We can see humanity’s influence on the environment though, right?

“Of course, large events such as desertification and salinization, and the depletion of ground water tables, are clearly observable. Nobody seems to care, but we can warn about these situations. The same goes for pollution. Copper-smelting places from the Hallstatt period (12th to 6th Century BC) in Austria can be localized based on plant growth; even now, there are only a few plants which will grow on those toxic foundry locations. That’s an example of an effect that persists millennia after the pollution occurred.”

Why do we rarely draw these parallels between past and present in our education system? Isn’t it a shame that we aren’t trained to think about the future as well?

“It’s true, perhaps we should focus on that more, that’s actually not a bad idea. The big international climate club which I’m a member of PAGES (Past Global Changes), does take this kind of thing into account. I participated in research of theirs on how the sun’s radiation impacts the temperature when tree-cover declines. There was also a conference I attended in Sweden on how humans don’t endure under marginal circumstances. At that conference I was the odd one out; I talked about the drowned landscapes in the West-Dutch prehistory, while most contributions pertained to the 19th century. I demonstrated how, when you reach the point at which you no longer have technical or cultural solutions for the changing circumstances, you will succumb, or at least you will not be able to subsist any longer in that location.”

Do you think that we, as archaeologists, cannot contribute to increasing awareness of our impact on the environment?

“You can warn people. There are a lot of calculations which you can make and show, but there will always be caveats and disclaimers.”

RUNNING OUR OWN SHOW

Our own Faculty has also changed a lot during your career. What would you say is the most important development since the dawn of our (inter-)faculty?

Without hesitation, Corrie chooses “The Fusion” [the merger of the Interfaculty of Geography and Prehistory with the archaeologists at the Faculties of Theology and the Humanities, to form an independent Faculty of Archaeology in the early nineties, ed.]. “That fusion is something I have always supported”. She also contributed to it from a managerial position. “There was a lot of resistance at first, but it was a rather gradual process. We started by ‘cohabiting’ at the Reuvenplaats to get acquainted and used to one another. And now we have a strong, solidly founded Faculty! Another crucial step was the formation of our own *propedeuse* [first year degree of the bachelor program, in 1987, ed.]. The ministry [of Education, Culture and Science, ed.] wasn’t fully on board with

the idea at the time, but they did allow us to try it out for four years as a pilot. It was an enormous success and gave us a substantial head start compared to other archaeological programs.”

Things are still changing constantly. In recent years universities, including Leiden, have focused strongly on internationalization. In Leiden, this started with the master-and research master programs, and more recently the bachelor programs have been updated as well. What do you think of this development?

“The effect is hard to gauge. We have become quite a large Faculty and must guard against an imbalance in student numbers with more students flocking to popular lecturers, as well as ensuring that the cohesion between specializations and departments is not lost. It would not be beneficial if one research field expands disproportionately, as that would create a state within a state. Perhaps we can’t truly put a stop to these developments, but we must be aware of the situation. We also have to guard against becoming too diffuse by creating too many different specializations.”

Are there things you miss from the old days?

Again, Corrie does not hesitate before answering. “The library. If only we still had that... When we surrendered our own Faculty library [some ten years ago, ed.], we did get some form of compensation from the University’s executive board and requesting books from the University Library works perfectly nowadays, but I still count it as a loss. You can no longer just go in to leaf through the new arrivals. There are a lot of local, non-English journals, from countries like France and Germany, with wonderful pictures of the latest excavations that are not easily found elsewhere. I miss these greatly. It would be lovely if we could reinstate the shelf of new arrivals in the Van Steenis building [the current Faculty building, ed.]. But other than that, the facilities are good. Of course, nothing is the way it used to be in Modderman’s era, we no longer have one non-scientific assistant per archaeologist, as used to be the case back then. I used to have my own analyst, Wim Kuijper, and I must say we made a great team throughout all those years. But I can’t complain, it is amazing just to have everybody under one roof. At the Reuvenplaats [the previous Faculty building, ed.], the lack of space led to the establishment of dispersed annexes and things just weren’t working out anymore.

I love having daily lunch with our colleagues at the Van Steenis to hear about the research they are up to, and we should really cherish this proximity. Of course, we have our issues as a faculty, but they are our issues, and as far as I’m concerned, we will keep running our own show.”

Lecturers have a profound impact on their students, but students, in turn, also influence their teachers, perhaps more than they will ever know. Without naming names, are there students (or PhD’s) that have stuck with you, and students who have influenced you?

“YES!”, Corrie responds enthusiastically, “My Spaniards! I had a profound respect for these PhD students because of their socioeconomic background. Their parents had limited means and worked hard to allow their children the opportunity to study. Their work paid off; their children now have good jobs. It is experiences like this one which ensure that you don’t become an ivory tower-researcher. Your students keep you grounded.”

STAR STATUS

A few years ago, your portrait was put up in the Senate Chamber of the Academy building (figure 3). On that wall you are surrounded by other ‘stars’, included in the rich history of our university. How do you feel about your portrait being there?

“When they asked me to be part of the wall of portraits, I felt honored. I was stunned that they had picked me, I never saw it coming. I had gradually built my career and spent a lot of years at the university, but I do not see that as a merit in and of itself. Apparently, or so they told me, I had become a role model. Of course, I myself had no idea that that was the case.”

The Leiden ‘club’ of careerwomen in archaeology picked you as their icon some years ago. This shows the impact you have had and it is a nice symbolic nod.

“I did find that surprising at the time. I assume it is because if you just keep going, pursuing your goals, you show others that things are possible. I have had students come up to me to tell me I had given them the confidence to pursue a career in archaeology, but even then, it never really dawned on me how I was seen. I do see it as a valuable accomplishment, yet I never consciously promoted any of this.”

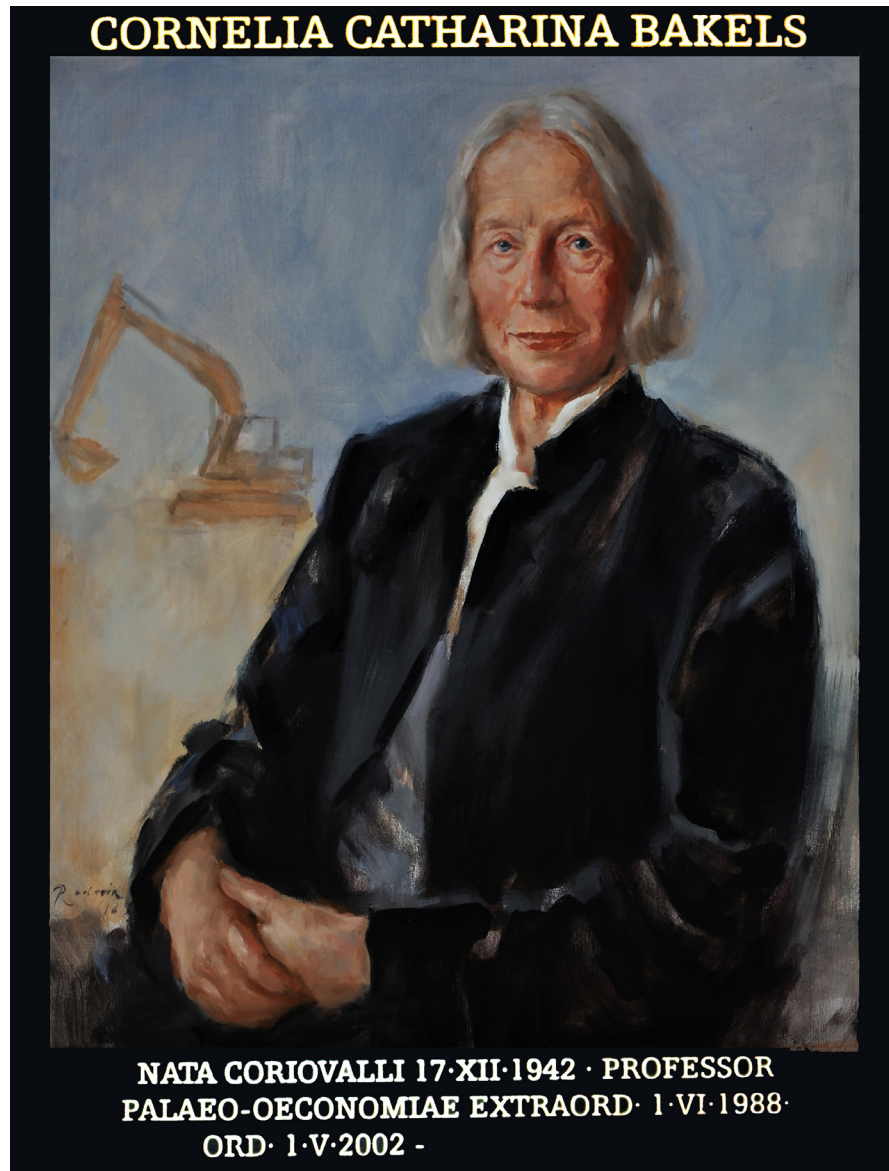


Figure 3: Corrie Bakels' portrait in the Senate Chamber of Leiden University (Portrait by R. van Schaardenburg).

Do you feel the painting in the Senate Chamber is a nice show of appreciation?

“Definitely! I also really like the writing underneath the portrait. It states my place of birth, in Latin, as Coriovallum. Corriovallum can be found on the Peutinger map, a Roman road map, but people don’t recognize the name. Most assume that it is some exotic location in Italy, while it is simply our own Dutch Heerlen. My rather unusual lecturing topic is also included: ‘paleoeconomy’. That covers the economies of the past, how people subsisted in their environment

in regard to food production, finding raw materials, etcetera.”

Academia has always made it harder for women to climb up the ladder and become full professors, as compared to men. Our Faculty was and is no exception to this reality. Do you feel like you had to make more sacrifices than your male colleagues?

“I never had to combine my career with a family or partner, so I can’t speak from experience on that topic. I had the misfortune of losing three men, so

I'm not really an example on that front. Throughout those hardships it was my work that kept me going, and science remains the most stable factor in my life. If I had had a family, it might all have been more difficult, but I would never have stopped working just because my husband became a professor, as other wives of male fellow professors were prone to do." Valiantly she adds "I wouldn't even have considered it, are you crazy?!"

These days a group of female Leiden scientists known as Athena's Angels are committed to improving women's situation in science. Their website opens as follows: "Many people assume that men and women have equal opportunities to be successful in an academic career. Yet women continue to be approached and treated differently than men, in ways that impact on their scientific career prospects." They gathered real-life incidents to demonstrate this gap, using pointed illustrations, in a section of their website called "Angel Alerts". We can assume that this was even more of an issue in your time. Did you ever encounter this type of barrier, and if so, how did you handle this?

"I looked at that website, it seems that some women have encountered truly strange situations. I myself also encountered some weird things, especially in my early days. At that time Leiden only had a few female professors, less than 15. Things did happen occasionally that made me think "what the...?!". But I let it pass me by. I adopted an attitude of "whatever, I'm still doing it my way". As I said, I always charted my own course. Incidentally, no one ever mistook me for the coffee lady, so apparently, I don't come across that way. In the Leiden club of professors and their – usually female-spouses, wives have asked me 'so which subject does your husband teach?'. I was also at times ignored by male professors, particularly in the meetings of the former Academic Council where I was the only woman. The chairman was a rather old-fashioned professor who couldn't abide women being scientists, so he always passed over me in the round of questions before closure of the meeting. I never let that get to me. I've never been much of a feminist; I don't like creating conflict. One way or another I will reach my goal, no matter what. So, I just thought 'just you wait', and then the other male colleagues on the council who found it embarrassing that I was ignored joined me in finding a solution so I could have my turn anyway."

"As a professor at my Faculty, being a woman was never really an issue. I did find it challenging to

deal with deans who want to push you into certain research niche or who keep you from charting your own scientific course. Of the women I know in other disciplines, most don't encounter issues, but at some faculties, things are more problematic. In some disciplines women really do have a hard time. It's usually a cultural thing, occurring in disciplines where men are also viciously competitive amongst themselves, but it must also be said that some women tend to make each other's lives harder as well."

Looking back over the years, are there things you would have done differently when it comes to this aspect?

Here, as well, her answer is a simple, resolute "No."

If you could give the next generation of female scientists some advice, what would it be?

"If you want something, go get it, keep your back straight and don't let anyone intimidate you."

CROWBAR

Together with Hans Kamermans, you have been the editor of Analecta for many years. Throughout this time the publishing world has changed as well, especially recently with the rapid onset of digitalization, and with on-line access becoming the new standard, preferably with an open access policy. On top of all that, competition for ranking has become fierce and scientists are stuck in a rat race to publish in the top journals. All these evolutions are bound to affect the Analecta as well. What is your vision of the future of the Analecta as a 'Faculty journal'?

"The Analecta were never meant to be a 'journal', rather they are a series for the Faculty, providing a place to publish materials -such as detailed excavation reports- that can't be published in any typical scientific journal. It also aims to provide a podium for manuscripts that don't fit in a journal because they are too local, or too much of a hybrid study. Because Analecta doesn't aspire to publish potentially prestigious articles, it isn't peer-reviewed, which means it gets an automatic B-ranking. Despite of this, the Analecta occupy a spot in the middle of the ranking of all archaeological journals, and definitely generate impact. I myself once used Analecta to publish an article that I couldn't place anywhere else, but which did end up being the crowbar that opened up NWO funding."

“The *excerpta*’s we published at times in recent years have had yet another purpose; namely to showcase the scope of research being done within our Faculty. The first *excerpta* was requested by Willem Willems when he was dean, to celebrate the anniversary of the Faculty. The wide array of research topics addressed within our Faculty could never be combined in any journal but could be bundled in the *Analecta*.”

“As regards the future: I honestly have no clue, that all depends on the policy of the new editors. I have taken myself out of the picture completely. *Analecta* could easily maintain its important role. It is not impossible that it could become an online series, but I think there will always be those who prefer a hard copy. The current production costs form no barrier; people always think printing is very expensive, but it truly isn’t. Don’t forget that open access also costs a substantial amount, something that is often overlooked. It is assumed that ‘your project will cover the costs’, but if you don’t have external funding for your project, as is the case for me, then the Faculty will have to pay up, or not publish.”

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

We’ve talked a lot about work, but there has also been a private life. As colleagues we know that you travel a lot in your free time, often to less-than common destinations. The exceptional nature and landscapes were often the motivation behind your choice of destination. Of all the journeys you have made, which one would you label as being the most fascinating?

“That is a tough question, because I have travelled to many, many, wonderful places. Even as a five-year-old, I was already hiking up the Vesuvius with my parents. That wasn’t altogether odd, as my father was a mining engineer. He was drawn to mines and mountains everywhere. My mother was equally adventurous. As a young girl she became governess at the Dutch embassy, first in Athens and later in Bolivia. That is where she met my father.”

Corrie mulls over her past voyages for a bit, then settles on her trip to Mauritania as being exceptionally special. “In Mauritania literally *everything* was different from here, from the lives people led to the

flora and the fauna we encountered. We sailed on a body of water similar to our Dutch Waddenzee, in a flat-bottomed boat that kept getting stranded, until we gave up and rented a small local wooden boat with rather prehistoric dimensions. We ate mullet caught by the captain in the sea and grilled on a steel car rim.”

With enthusiastic cheer Corrie tells us of many more memorable voyages. At one point she travelled to Namibia, just to see the *Welwitschia mirabilis* plant. “This plant is categorized as a living fossil and can only be found in the Namib desert. It can live for centuries; some specimens are even over a thousand years old.”

When asked whether any destinations remain on her bucket list, she answers no. “As a biologist, I wanted to visit all of earth’s biotopes, and I have completed that mission, so that finishes off my bucket list.” However, this doesn’t stop her from having more dreams for future travels, even if she has to lower her ambitions to accommodate physical limitations. “I would like to go to Australia, but the flight there takes too long. I have also always wanted to visit Kamchatka, which was inaccessible for the longest time. Now that it is open to the public, I can no longer make it. I enrolled for a trip to Madagascar several times, yet each time it was cancelled due to an insufficient number of participants. As an extra complicating factor, I can no longer lift heavy loads, so my suitcase can only weigh five kilos at most. And then, to find travelling companions...at my age, very few people still want to come along.”

In any case, Corrie does not have to fear for a lack of scientific and social contacts at the Faculty. Students, PhD students, and colleagues still respect and perceive her as an inspiring, innovating colleague who is always willing and enthusiastic to have her brain picked on any topic. A colleague who steadily charts her own course, yet never in isolation or to the detriment of others.

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