

A tribute to Corrie Bakels on the occasion of her 65th birthday

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This is a special issue of *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany (VHA)* and therefore gets a special introduction: as some of you may realise, Prof. Dr. C. C. Bakels, Corrie to friends and colleagues, will celebrate her 65th birthday this year. We therefore thought it would be appropriate to honour her with this issue of *VHA*. It is composed of articles written by a selection of her students at Leiden University and from colleagues with whom she has co-operated closely. Of course there are many more students, friends and colleagues who could have contributed, but the number of pages available was limited!

Corrie Bakels was born on the 17th of December 1942 in Heerlen, in the south of the Netherlands. She went to High School (Gymnasium B) and wanted to follow in her father's footsteps and become a mining engineer. During her Biology study at Leiden University, by pure coincidence (she was "filling in gaps" in her program) she became acquainted with archaeology.

Shortly after her Cum Laude graduation in 1967, when she was working on water sewerage systems, Corrie was asked by Prof. Dr. P. J. R. Modderman to set up an archaeobotanical laboratory at the Institute for Prehistory at Leiden University. Starting with nothing but a chair, an empty desk and a bare bookshelf, she turned it into a prosperous unit.

Her first important find was from Hienheim (Germany), where Prof. Dr. P. J. R. Modderman was excavating a Linear Bandkeramik (LBK) site. In the fills of pit 414 she saw charred peas and demanded that the contents should be sieved. This was the start of many samples to come! *Pisum* was not her favourite species though; *Papaver* came first and this was connected with her speciality: LBK.

In May 1978, she defended her thesis entitled "Four Linear Bandkeramik sites and their environment". Soon she expanded both in period (Mesolithic up to modern

times), in material (charred and waterlogged seeds, pollen, the origin of flint and also stone identification on axes and adzes), in area (mainly the Netherlands and Northern France, but also as far afield as Russia, Sardinia, and Yemen), and in research questions, but the connection with human influence was always present. In 1971, she got an assistant, Nel Blom, followed in 1973 by Wim Kuijper.

In June 1988 she was granted a personal chair, in Palaeo-economy, the only one in Western Europe, for which she gave an inaugural speech in May 1989, called “A cargo of cereals” based on a famous Dutch folk story “The woman of Stavoren”, in which cereals turn out to be more important than gold or jewellery. Grain is the basis of all wealth, as every archaeobotanist will agree.

From 1977 onwards, she has been coaching students and promovendi from the Netherlands and abroad, mainly from France, Spain, Denmark and Germany. It is remarkable that all Spanish Dr.s in archaeobotany asked Corrie to be (co-) promoter. She publishes in international scientific journals, but she also continues writing for local journals, as is visible in the list of publications. Corrie is also associate editor of *VHA* from its very start in 1992. Besides this, she is very active in management affairs within and outside the University, she gives guest lectures and presents papers in many countries, and she offers assistance to exhibitions and conferences (for example the coordinating committee of the

International Work Group of Palaeo-ethnobotany). She participated in the Dutch National Science Competition (sponsored by NWO, the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research) and became the best scientist of the Netherlands in 1995. As a silent witness, there is still a giant cup standing in her house. And then to think she never plays games.....

In her scarce free time she is an enthusiastic bird watcher and she has been on many adventurous holidays all over the world. She might find more time for that, but in the near future a book has to be finished on the agrarian history of the loess areas west of the River Rhine (5300 BC–AD 1200).

Congratulating and thanking Corrie at the same time for everything she did for us and for archaeobotanical science, we hope everybody will have an interesting journey through this special volume of *VHA*. The extensive list of Corrie’s publications is available as Electronic Supplementary Material.

The editors wish to express their gratitude towards one PhD student of Corrie who never uses his title but contributed to this volume in a very special way: James Greig (Birmingham) very skilfully undertook the copy-editing of all manuscripts. Besides, we thank all invited referees, who picked up their task with great consciousness. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude towards the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, for subsidising this oversized issue of *VHA*.