

## FOREWORD

After 38 years, the radiocarbon community returned to Groningen to hold its 16th International Radiocarbon Conference. It is the unfortunate but natural course of life that more and more members of the “old gang” are no longer with us, either by retirement or by their sad decease. The old spirit, however, is still there and many young and active scientists have succeeded their predecessors. The changing composition of the conference participants was particularly evident in the shift from North American attendance to participation from Eastern Europe and Asia, a development already noticeable in Glasgow. Thanks to generous donations by a number of  $^{14}\text{C}$  laboratories, the financial problems of many colleagues from these countries could to a large extent be solved; 39 participants were subsidized, primarily students and colleagues from countries with currency problems.

The conference featured a total of 245 registered participants and 22 registered accompanying persons. A grand total of 216 abstracts were submitted. Of these, only a maximum of 57 could be admitted to oral presentation since the organizers decided against parallel sessions; 149 papers were simultaneously exhibited as posters during the entire week and presented at special poster sessions. Only a few papers were cancelled at the last minute. For the selection procedure we had the valuable advice of the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee. Final decisions were made primarily on the basis of the suitability of the contributions for either type of presentation, rather than considering the potential impact of the paper (contrary to the general impression).

Finally, the conference proceedings contain 111 accepted papers, their selection assisted by the invaluable help of many colleagues in reviewing the manuscripts. The editors took great effort to carefully and conscientiously exercise their responsibility to have as many papers published as possible, at the same time maintaining the standards of *RADIOCARBON* and the previous international conferences. The editors took pride in editing the relatively large number of manuscripts from colleagues with less experience in publishing in the English language.

Some papers needed more additional attention than was available in the strict schedule of publication within one year after the conference. Some papers were directed to a regular issue of *RADIOCARBON*; the dendrochronological calibration papers have been diverted to a special Calibration Issue expected to appear later in 1998.

We have chosen to publish the proceedings “within one year after the conference”. This put pressure especially on the reviewers (the authors are used to writing their papers at the last minute anyway). However, we know that the community itself will be the first to benefit. The scientific editors want to express their high appreciation for the skills and devotion of the *RADIOCARBON* staff editors in Tucson, David and Kim, with whom they had such frequent, efficient and pleasant cooperation and who managed to replace Renee so well.

At the Groningen Centre for Isotope Research the conference will be long remembered, especially by one of the organizers who almost at the same time celebrated the end of his career. His part-time early retirement allowed the institute the organization of such an event, which otherwise could not have been realized. Also essential were the devotion of the entire staff of the laboratory, especially shortly before and during the conference, something truly heartwarming for the organization committee.

A final thanks to the radiocarbon community for trusting us before, making our life easy during, and obeying our rules after the conference, but primarily for being there in June 1997. For us, it was a

tremendous pleasure and we hope that our friends in Jerusalem will have the same experience in the year 2000.

*Wim Mook*  
*Hans van der Plicht*

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Organizing Committee thanks the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Prof. P. C. van der Kruit, for his personal address during the opening ceremony of the conference, and the Rector Magnificus of Groningen University for his reception of the conference participants in the beautiful Aula of the main university building.

The conference was most pleasantly and efficiently taken care of by the hosts in the Martinihal Conference Centre, Ms. T. Alingh and Ms. A. Keukenkamp.

The Committee is grateful to Prof. Waterbolk and colleagues from the Biological Archaeological Institute for their assistance in planning and running the conference excursion.

The partner program was efficiently and smoothly taken care of by Betty Mook, Tjallie van der Plicht, Ellen Meijer and Mien Waterbolk.

We acknowledge Henk Jansen and Harro Meijer for designing the two conference logos used as cover illustrations for the two conference volumes. The caricatures of the Conference Editors were drawn by Jesse B. van Muylwijck.

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences  
Groninger Universiteitsfonds  
10 radiocarbon laboratories who each donated an amount equal to the cost of one  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating

The conference was sponsored by exhibitions from

High Voltage Engineering Europe, Amersfoort, the Netherlands  
Canberra Packard Benelux, the Netherlands  
Louwers Hapert  
Micromass  
Wallac EG&G Benelux

and not least by Isotech, the funding source run by the Centre for Isotope Research.

#### THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Ellen Druffel, University of California, Irvine, USA  
Mebus Geyh, Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Bodenforschung, Hannover, Germany  
Douglas D. Harkness, NERC Radiocarbon Laboratory, East Kilbride, Scotland  
R. E. M. Hedges, Oxford University, England  
Bernd Kromer, Universität Heidelberg, Germany  
Sheela Kusumgar, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, India  
Ingeborg Levin, Universität Heidelberg, Germany  
R. L. Otlet, Radiocarbon Dating, Wantage, England

J. M. Punning, Institute of Ecology, Tallinn, Estonia  
John C. Vogel, Quaternary Research Dating Unit, CSIR, Pretoria, South Africa  
John S. Vogel, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California, USA

**THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

Henny E. Deenen  
Harro A. J. Meijer  
Willem G. Mook  
Hans van der Plicht

The 17th International Radiocarbon Conference has been scheduled for June 18–23, 2000, outside of Jerusalem, Israel. Please see the full-page announcement at the back of this issue for full details.