

*Editorial*

A NEW MEDIUM IN THE STRUGGLE FOR UNDERSTANDING

This is the first volume of a new scientific periodical. Since there are already so many journals, there is reason to write something about the motives which have led to the addition of the present one to that long list, and the ideals which exist as to the functioning of this journal. I will try to do so, by approaching these subjects from some distance.

With the increase in human knowledge and in scientific specialization, each branch of science developed its own professional language. In addition, specialized knowledge also influenced the meaning which scientists attach to more general concepts. Thus, a fossil is something different to a stratigrapher and to a taxonomist. An allergist and a palaeopalynologist have different ideas about pollen. Time does not mean just the same to a botanist and a palaeobotanist.

In the initial stage of the explosive development of modern science, each new specialization went its own way. This has now changed radically. The belief in the unity of science has again found wide acceptance. It is realized that the various scientific disciplines need each other's knowledge and experience. The rise of many interdisciplinary fields of research underlines this trend. But researchers entering such interdisciplinary fields are still historically laden with different languages.

One of the main problems with which present-day science has to cope is *the struggle for understanding*.

The solution to this problem is certainly not that scientists forget the history of their specialization and relativize their own input, to become unitary scientists. Aside from the fact that this is now practically impossible, it would be undesirable because it is the diversity in ability, interest and knowledge that animates our world. How dull would the situation be if we were all botanists, geologists or physicians.

The way out seems to lie much more in the revival of a "spiritus academicus". The best way to overcome the disadvantages of specialization is an increase in specialization, in that sense that a scientist keeps his or her own field of research thus restricted that he or she is able to reserve a fraction of her or his time for more general interests. This will enable a specialist to learn to understand other

specialists and to communicate with them, to the benefit of both. It is also the gateway to a sharp increase in team work, one of the major needs of modern science.

Scientific periodicals form a most important chain in scientific communication. They need to be tuned in to the requirements set by the development of science. The present periodical hopes to succeed in functioning along this line.

More specifically, it will try to help to bridge the gaps between the various branches of palynology, between micro- and macropalaeobotany, between palaeobotany and geology.

Since all of macropalaeobotany and about four-fifths of present-day palynology deal with fossil plant remains, it is to be expected that papers on plant fossils will dominate in the journal. Thusfar, such papers found their way mainly to either botanical or geological journals. What part of the literature a palaeobotanist finds in his or her library depends usually on what kind of institute or company he or she is affiliated to. I hope that this journal may find its way more easily to both major groups.

The oldest branch of palynology is pollen morphology. Although at present not the largest branch, it still takes a central position. It has much to give to melittopalynology and medical palynology on the one side and to palaeopalynology on the other, and in its turn may learn much from these branches. Therefore, there is every reason to include all these branches equally in the scope of this journal.

To succeed in its aims, the journal will need the full support of workers in palaeobotany and palynology. To exist as an independant periodical, it needs sufficient subscribers. To function as a fruitful means of communication, it needs high-level contributions of international importance. These may be research papers, review articles, monographic studies, short communications, critical notes and discussions, news items, and any other contribution that may serve to progress the fields which this periodical will cover. As a guide to authors, detailed hints for the preparation of manuscripts will be published in the first issue of volume 6. This, because the first five volumes are made available for the publication of the proceedings of the Second International Conference on Palynology, Utrecht (The Netherlands), 1966. Separates of such hints to authors are, however, already available on request.

A. A. MANTEN (Utrecht)