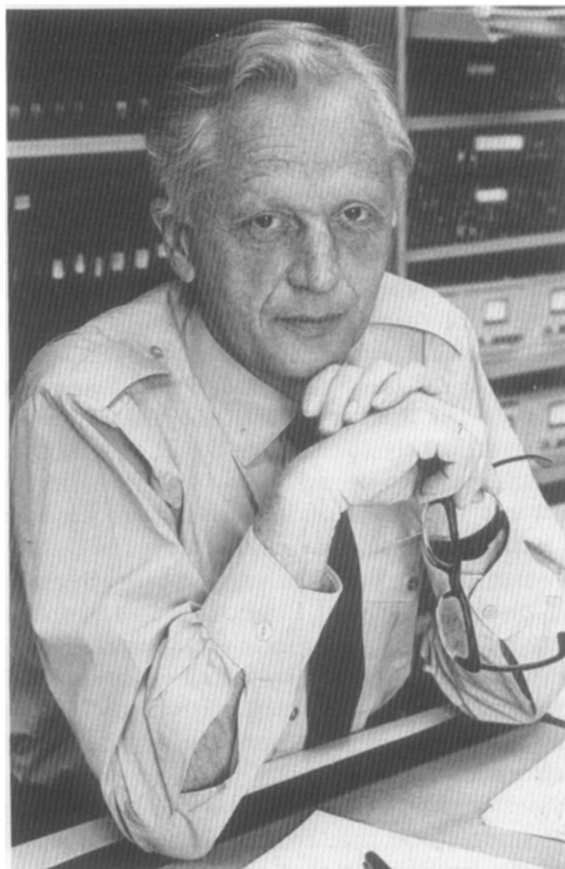


IN MEMORIAM



DR. JAN MULLER 1922—1983

After a relatively short period of sickness, our editorial board member Dr. Jan Muller died of a serious illness on the 5th of October. For many of us it will be hard to understand that this vital man who still had so many ideas in mind, who had so many plans for the future and who always had suggestions worthy of attention, is no longer in our midst.

Jan Muller started his career as palynologist in the service of oil exploration, first in Venezuela and later in Serawak (Malaysia). From this time on important scientific publications began to appear, for example, a paper together with Kuyl and Waterbolk (1955) on the application of palynology to oil geology with an important contribution on the morphology of pollen and spores, and later (1959) a paper on the palynology of recent sediments of

the Orinoco Delta, Venezuela. From that time on he was greatly interested in pollen analysis in the tropics, a part of palynology with which only few investigators in the world were occupied and in which only few publications then existed. Even after his specialization in other directions in later years, he never completely left this field of study and he also continuously encouraged other people to work on it.

After his years abroad, Jan was connected with the Central Palynological Laboratory of the Royal Dutch Shell at Rijswijk, but when in 1967 he was offered a job as pollen morphologist in the Rijksherbarium at Leiden, he accepted gladly. It was a wonderful chance to develop his scientific qualities to the maximum. He was asked to study the morphology of pollen in combination with taxonomic results of his colleagues at the Herbarium. Within a short time a number of important papers were published; e.g. on *Sonneratia* (1969a) and Ochnaceae (1969b). With these and other publications he soon attracted the attention of foreign pollen morphologists. It was quite logical that he was asked to join the editorial boards of the *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* in 1973, of the *World Pollen and Spore Flora* also in 1973 and of *Grana* in 1978. His mild, but justified criticism and valuable suggestions often helped significantly to improve the quality of many publications.

It was but a further step to be asked to participate in a number of international organisations. One of his first experiences was in connection with one of the most important symposia held during the last ten years, that on the evolutionary significance of the exine. This Symposium under the auspices of the Linnean Society of London and the International Commission for Palynology was held in London in September 1974. The proceedings of the Exine Symposium was edited by I.K. Ferguson and J. Muller (1976) and represents a scientific top not subsequently equalled in quality. Furthermore, during the years 1971–1976 Jan Muller was vice-president of the International Commission for Palynology.

One of his greatest concerns was his contacts with French Palynologists. As none other, he understood that that which French palynologists are presenting is of so much importance that the language barrier, which so often leads to isolation, needed to be broken down as much as possible. As a Dutchman with a very good knowledge of French and a perfect training, in foreign countries, of the English language, he was in an ideal position to help to connect people in the two language areas. This culminated in his translation of Le Thomas's important French thesis on the pollen morphology and phylogeny of the African Annonaceae into English, so that English-speaking people could take advantage of it. In this humble act he stressed in the first place how important French palynological papers can be and secondly that he could efface himself completely for the sake of science.

Another important scientific subject he continuously worked on was the comparison of fossil angiosperm pollen with recent representatives. He began with a critical recapitulation of Tertiary pollen in the tropics, a joint publication with Germeraad and Hopping (1967), but later he extended it to fossil records of extant angiosperms from the Cretaceous onwards from all over the world (1970, 1981).

In the meantime, his pollen morphological work became more and more closely connected with phylogeny and many publications gave evidence of his ideas (*Lepisanthes*, 1970b; *Dimocarpus*, 1971; *Barringtonia*, 1973). However, the last five years he was most interested, in and fascinated by, the functional part of the pollen grain. The harmomegathy and all what was connected with this phenomenon had his close attention. He therefore was an admirer of Wodehouse, the American father of pollen morphology and initiator of the study of functions and, according to Jan, too little cited in the literature. This reached a culminating point in his exciting paper on the architecture and function of the exine in some Lythraceae and Sonneratiaceae (1981a).

Jan Muller made many friends in The Netherlands as well as abroad, not only from the time he worked at the Rijksherbarium, but also from earlier times, especially Venezuela. Many connecting threads led from his work room to people all over the world, threads which now have been cut abruptly and without warning. Only a few of his friends were able, and had the honour, to say goodbye to him. His friendly behaviour, his readiness to help, and his immense knowledge of the field of palynology, combined with a great zest for work, will linger for a long time in the minds of his friends. We shall remember Jan Muller as an important pollen morphologist who did much to promote palynology in the world in its widest sense.

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