

GRONINGEN, A FEW MONTHS AFTER . . . ¹

We made it! Finally we have worked our way through the more than 100 conference contributions. Our desks are clean (more-less).

The staff at *RADIOCARBON* is now very happy (presumably) because they received work for many months to come... make your breast but wet, you may now wash this little pig. In retrospect we sincerely want to share our experiences with the community.

Not that we want to look for nails on low water, but there were many contributions where we could not bake any chocolate from. They come mainly from countries which we failed to conquer in our golden age. We once had a little eye fallen on St. Petersburg—remember, Czar Peter the Great was one of our first allochtone citizens. His house north of Amsterdam is still open for visits. Australia, Ceylon and Indonesia were ours to keep, and there was even a Dutch pope ruling the planet. That little mouse will definitely develop a little tail in due time. In Decima we learned the Japanese a medieval version of Double Dutch. Sort of what they still speak today in South Africa, Belgium-West and Holland, Michigan.



King Billy held what is now the UK as our territory. In some provinces overthere they still celebrate this sensitive fact by running around in funny orange clothing, which the real Dutch only still do when they are playing football (I mean soccer). But, for a still unknown reason we traded Harlem, Flushing and Brooklyn for Aruba, Langetabbetje and Stoelmans-island.

But that appeared to be a cat in the sack: the British sold us turnips instead of lemons. Just think of it: if our ancestors did not shine the plate there in New Amsterdam, Dutch would be the world number one language! There would be windmills in Arizona, the Mexicans would be milking cows for ages now and wear wooden shoes, and the Americans would all go to work on their bicycle. There would be plenty of dikes all along Florida. Hans Brinkers would be president and is in serious trouble because of the Windmill-gate scandal. Football would be soccer. The eleven city skating tour would be much more interesting. Saint Nick is travelling over the roofs on a white horse. No problems with yards, pounds per square inch and imperial gallons. Chicago has a traffic-circulation plan like Groningen. One could go from NYC to LA with a strippen-card.

But, best of all: *RADIOCARBON* would be printed in Dutch!!

Unfortunately it walked out of hand due to the oystreich version of the poldermodel of our ancestors. It is me what. The world is a pipe of cinnamon, one sucks on it and gets one's proper share. The next best thing we could do, of course, is to send isotope people around. They are now settled in Seattle, Kiel, Lower Hutt, Sydney, Mainz, Kyoto, Pretoria, Toronto, Oxford and a few places we keep secret. Only these selected few will be able to fully apprehend this writing.

So there we are. At the Groningen conference everybody had to speak English or rather American, including the Russians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Frisians from the lab and even the French. Throw it but in my slof! Serious shit on the marble!

¹This essay arrived mysteriously in Tucson with a Groningen postmark. We determined that it was composed in an ancient dialect formerly spoken on a North Sea island halfway between Den Haag and Harwich, but the translator that we hired committed suicide before completing a version in modern English. We therefore present it as received. —*RADIOCARBON* editors

The editors, very Dutch in origin, had to read and try to understand all the papers. And Groningen became soon a remote missionpost of Tucson. The dogs do not like the bread of it. After the tenth paper we began to see cactus growing in the rain, and an occasional rattlesnake got crushed under the tires of my bicycle. I saw ships sailing in the canyons. But we have to admit that our knowledge of the English language became enriched considerably. History finally caught up with us. We received a cookie from our own dough, and there were many new things hanging from my bicycle. A short flower reading from our new vocabulary: we learned about the power of peat, figure captains, skill decays, rocky archaeology, palaeosteem, tessalized datasets and gibbon clay. Only the latter remains sort of a mystery. The best we could make of it is the double-dutch expression “ape cabbage”. This one broke my wooden shoe, and I fell from my little stick. Some authors are really sniffed from the rats! Consequently, I was ready to give my portion to Fikkie, hang the lute in the willowtrees and choose eggs for the money. The real hamquestion is how we managed to keep the faith. Our secretary knew: when we were depressed she started declamating from the postmodern classic “A Typical Day in the Lab” by Meyer Rubin (*RADIOCARBON* 34, no. 3 (1992): iv–v) and that made us go on. In Eastern Europe, brown could not pull the conference fee so this was all settled in the form of Vodka. That was a big help for becoming a drinking organ. Like binding the bacon on the cat. Oops, now I fell through the basket. I made it all soldier. We like there well porridge from! Editing was like an elephant in the China cabinet.

This was the second Groningen Radiocarbon Conference, following 1959. Being a believer in cyclic phenomena, the next Groningen conference will be in 2035 cal AD in Groningen, Suriname (indeed, not so far from Langetabbetje). One of us will then be in his eighties, the other one more than a century old. I would then finally get my free T-shirt (no yellow please).

What can we expect more? An annual calibration curve back to The Odderade (now renamed as The Stuiver) will just be finished. There is a heated debate to rename the Last Glacial Maximum to the Mookien. All calibration programs will be finally debugged for the millennium disaster which happened more than three decades ago.

The ^{14}C standard year will be shifted by one unit to 1951. That is easier to remember because Hans was born in that year. The Groningen ^{14}C chief analyst, then in his nineties, is approaching GrN-100000. In Scandinavia, the FD (Future Dryas) has just begun, cancelling the sea level rise threatening the Groningen Martinitower (predicted in the 1997 conference T-shirts). And the *RADIOCARBON* Office has been moved to the Borgmeren in Harkstede after the retirement of David and Kim.

But the best news is that the 29th Radiocarbon Conference will definitely be held in Dutch, with simultaneous translation (only at very special request). Dutch became the new official language for the USE, the United States of Europe. This happened when the Germans decided on a new grammar reform, and discovered that they were actually speaking a form of Dutch. Pennsylvania can be happy. To us, personally, it will all be sausage.

The final conclusion: we indeed have a little stitch loose and yes, we did receive a blow from the windmill! Otherwise we could not have organized a conference like we did. We sincerely hope that we will not make the readers of the proceedings glad with a dead sparrow, or that somebody’s paper fell between the wall and the ship... we are going to knap a little owl now, and give the pipe to Martin. Excuse me, to Austin of course.

Nazdarovje, see you in Jerusalem, and best regards to your stuff!!

Hans van der Plicht