

IN MEMORIAM ANNEKE CLASON
30 APRIL 1932 – 7 APRIL 2008

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Professor Anneke Clason died at her home in Haren, near the Dutch city of Groningen, on 7 April 2008, aged 75. Her passing signifies the loss of a passionate advocate of archaeozoology, both in the Netherlands and further afield.

Anneke joined the then Biological-Archaeological Institute in Groningen as a student assistant on 1 November 1956. Her job at the Institute was to relaunch archaeozoology, which had become marginalised after her teacher Albert Egges van Giffen's 1913 thesis. She was appointed a researcher on 1 January 1962, becoming professor of archaeozoology in 1994.

She began her work as an archaeozoologist by single-handedly expanding the then very limited comparative collection, which over the years would become one of the best in the world. She performed her research not only in the Netherlands but also, and more especially, in other countries, including Germany, former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Africa, training young people to become

archaeozoologists in all these countries. Her greatest research interests were domestication, the introduction of animals, and the use of antlers and bone for making tools.

Quite early on in her career, Anneke concluded that archaeozoology could flourish only through international collaboration. In 1971 she became one of the founders of an international organisation for fellow archaeozoologists that would later become the International Council for Archaeozoology (ICAZ). From the very beginning until 2002 she was an active member of the ICAZ board. Two years before she retired, she was made an honorary member. Many of her colleagues from all over the world, on hearing the sad news of her death, remarked on the great loss to ICAZ and archaeozoology. One quote says it all: “she was, in fact, the heart and soul of ICAZ”.

Anneke was also interested in live domesticated animals, the descendants of the animals whose archaeological remains she had studied. To prevent the last of the old breeds from being lost, in 1976 she and a number of other concerned individuals set up the Dutch Rare Breeds Survival Trust. The organisation continues to flourish to this day.

For us, her Dutch students, Anneke was above all the hub of our academic world in the 1980s and early 1990s. It was then that she ran a lively archaeozoology department, which not only housed several PhD students, but also regularly welcomed foreign guests on short or long stays. Many of them came from Spain, as well as from the United Kingdom, Indonesia and India. Looking back, the atmosphere then was unique. Anneke inspired us in our work, filling us with enthusiasm. Though she was demanding, she also gave us a healthy dose of freedom. She was very involved with ‘her’ people. In all honesty, we have to say that she sometimes took this a little far – every one of us clashed with her at some point, when she ventured too far into private territory. But she was also a kind of mother to us, who was genuinely concerned about us, our friends and our families. When some of her PhD students had kids, she had a playpen placed in the lab so that the new young parents could keep an eye on their offspring while they worked. In this respect, too, she was ahead of her time.

We all have a lot to thank her for, and every one of us cherishes our memories of her. She was quite unique, and we will miss her dearly.