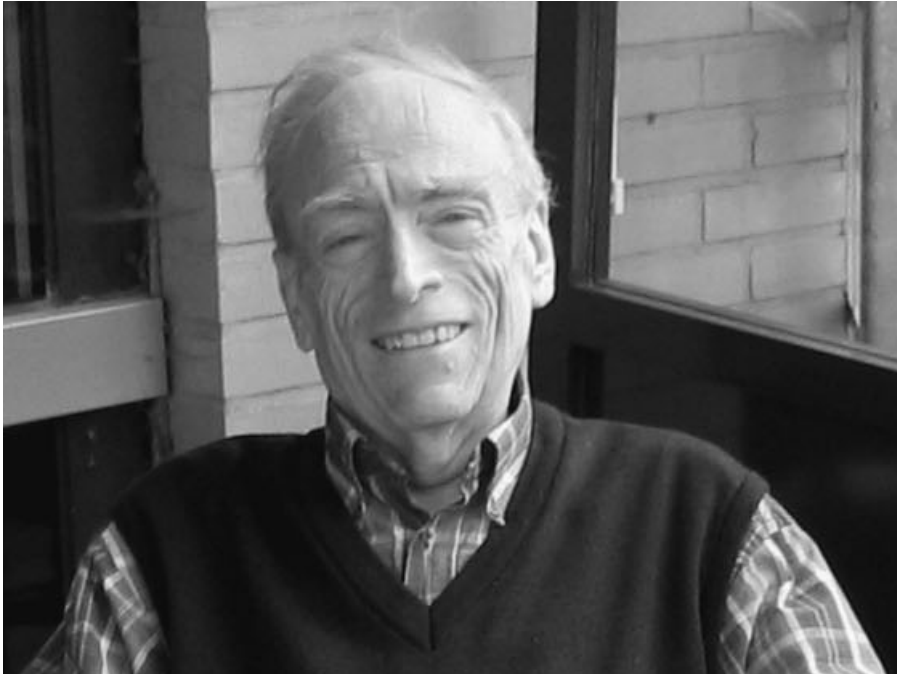


IN MEMORIAM BEN VAN BEEK (1938 – Amsterdam – 2005)



On July 4, 2005, Bernhard Leopold van Beek passed away, two days after an apoplexy had struck him in his sleep in his home in Amsterdam, Ben's beloved metropolis that had seen his birth on February 25, 1938, his education, and his career in archaeology at Amsterdam University*.

After a short banking career, and having completed his military service, he studied physical geography and ecological archaeology (1958-1970). Since, in 1966, the late professor Willem Glasbergen had appointed him as his personal assistant, Ben acquired himself an essential position as respected colleague in the former I.P.P., the *Instituut voor Prae- en Protohistorie*, the present-day Amsterdam Archaeological Centre. Ben was pensioned off in 2003, in the age of 65, but remained active in archaeology, in spite of a deteriorating health.

* Photo taken and kindly provided by Dr. Willy H. Metz (Huizen).

In the sixties, the seventies, and the early eighties – the old IPP’s formative period – Ben was trusted with the management and the financial administration of a growing program of archaeological research in all periods of Dutch archaeology – from the Stone Ages to the Medieval time – and some major projects in the Near East, Southern America, and on Spitsbergen. Ben noticed a parallel between the distribution of IPP-excavations all over the world and the 16th century Spanish empire of Charles V, ‘in which the sun never set’. Since he had conducted – in 1967, together with a.o. Jan Kees Haalebos (†) – an excavation in the Roman auxiliary fort at Valkenburg (province of Zuid-Holland), Ben got fully involved in provincial Roman archaeology, and contributed much to the institute’s long-term program to document the massive numbers of artefacts and to analyse their distribution over the succeeding *castella* in the Valkenburg stratified dwelling-mound, brought to light, since 1941, by the late Groningen professor Albert Egges van Giffen. With Willy Groenman-van Waateringe, Ben prepared and published an extensive report on the 1980 excavations of ‘De Romeinse castella te Valkenburg ZH’, in: J.H.F. Bloemers (ed.) 1988: *Archeologie en Oecologie van Holland tussen Rijn en Vlie*, Assen/Maastricht, 1-120.

In the early seventies, Ben joined the board (1971-1975) of our young *Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society*, which had started publishing *Talanta* – and the Society’s *Studies* – in 1969. A wide circle of archaeologists with different trainings and specialist programs profited by Ben’s keen interest in archaeology, and enjoyed his friendship.

For long years, Ben was completely immersed in the IPP’s management and the university’s political affairs on different managerial levels, embedded as he was in that special Amsterdam way of political debate. He succeeded to significantly delay what eventually could not be averted: the reduction of the amount of people and money that had enabled the university archaeological research group to tackle and integrate a broad spectrum of investigative themes. It would have afforded Ben no consolation that “the loss of *humaniora* is not restricted to the Netherlands, or Europe” (J.P. Stronk 2002-2003: The Trojan Horse, *Talanta* 34-35, 50). Ben’s combativeness resulted, in the nineties, in a position in the university’s central employees council.

Seven years (1983-1990) were granted to Ben to write his dissertation on a subject that had fascinated him already as a student. On September 19, 1990, Ben successfully defended his thesis *Steentijd te Vlaardingen, Leidschendam en Voorschoten. De vondstverspreiding in Laat-Neolithische nederzettingen in het Hollandse kustgebied* (279 pp. & 125 Figs.).

Outside the institute, wherein his colleagues refused to see that his political talents could keep the IPP Enterprise flying, Ben saw possibilities in these years to create new forms of institutionalised work for young (unemployed) archaeologists: he was the main founding father of *RAAP*, The Regional Archaeological Archives Project, today a great and indispensable enterprise

specialised in systematic surveying – *Landesaufnahme* in antiquated jargon – including the assessment of the potential of archaeological sites (to reconstruct the cultural landscape) in The Netherlands and abroad, within the framework of heritage management and ‘Malta archaeology’.

Ben also was very much involved in the realization of the SNA, the *Stichting voor de Nederlandse Archeologie*, a national platform for both professional and amateur archaeologists – especially in its contacts with government (local, regional, and national) and social organizations – of which he was member of the board for some years.

Over the years Ben facilitated, both financially and as (one of the) editor(s), the publication of a number of IPP-*Festschrifte: Ex Horreo* [IPP 1951-1976] (Amsterdam, 1977), *Voeten in de aarde* (Amsterdam, 1993), and *Het Instituut - 50 jaar IPP/AAC* (Amsterdam, 2003). Ben himself published in a.o. *Helinium* and *Westerheem*, in the *Assendelver Polder Papers* 1 (Amsterdam, 1987), and in the *Liber Amicorum* for Jacques A.E. Nenquin (1991).

Ben succeeded – opposing the university’s administration – to ‘collect’ a sufficient number of sponsors to organize the 16th ‘Limes Congress’ in the Netherlands (Kerkrade, 1995) and to publish its proceedings (1997: W. Groenman-van Waateringe/B.L. van Beek/W.J.H. Willems/S.L. Wynia (eds.), *Roman Frontier Studies. Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies* (Oxbow Monograph 91, Oxford).

In 2001, Ben edited – with Willy Metz and Hannie Steegsma – a voluminous *Festschrift* for Jay Butler (W.H. Metz/B.L. van Beek/H. Steegsma (eds.), *Patina. Essays presented to Jay Jordan Butler on the occasion of his 80th birthday*, Groningen/Amsterdam, xii + 619 pp.).

In the nineties Ben found new research themes in Dutch Colonial archaeology in the Caribbean in the early 17th century, visited Venezuela twice, and published on the salt-gathering activities of Dutch sailors on the Venezuelan coast (with W.H. Metz and O.R. Ortiz Troncoso: 1999, *Spiegel Historiae* 34, 208-213; *idem* 2001, in: *Patina*, 75-83; 2002, in: M.H. Bartels *et alii*, *Hollanders uit en thuis*, 71-84).

As a teacher, Ben focused systematically on the *facts* in archaeology, grieving those students who found their inspiration mainly in shifting paradigms and other high-level abstractions to abide with.

We will miss Ben.

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