

## INTRODUCTION

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### PURPOSE OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

It is on the initiative of the Department of Quaternary Geology and Physical Geography in the Amsterdam Free University that this special issue is published. Dr. W. de Gans and Drs. P. Cleveringa especially took great efforts to realize both the organisation and finances; their help is greatly appreciated.

The main purpose was to present this issue to Prof. Wiggers during his farewell lecture at the University. This lecture is to be given as a logical result of Wiggers' decision to accept another job (as director of the 'Rijksinstituut voor Natuurbeheer'). It must be considered the end of an important geological career. Ir. B. P. Hageman, Director of the Geological Survey of The Netherlands, has already stressed the importance of Prof. Wiggers' work in the development of Quaternary geology in our country in the preface to this issue.

Only few geologists develop really new ideas, leaving their impact for a long time. Prof. Wiggers is certainly one of these 'happy few'. This is shown easily by the still frequent quotations of his Ph. D. thesis, published more than 25 years ago; it is a typical example of an integrated survey, considering stratigraphy, sedimentology, palynology and other disciplines, with direct applicability for land-use purposes.

In fact, such an approach is characteristic of Wiggers: his broad interest has resulted in an impressive scale of activities. Therefore it is a great pleasure for me (as 'special editor') to present this special issue, dedicated to Prof. Wiggers on the occasion of his farewell to the University. The issue is meant to reflect the divergence of Wiggers' interests and to emphasize his many contacts both in The Netherlands and abroad. For all those people who are aware of Wiggers' contributions to Quaternary geology, his farewell is felt as a considerable loss. All will agree that he may develop important activities in his new field as well and we wish him a fruitful and happy time.

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### CONTRIBUTIONS

The preparation of a special issue requires considerable time, not least since the invited authors need to work out their ideas or observations into a form which is suitable for such an occasion. In various cases authors told me that they appreciated the invitation, but that other duties prevented their cooperation in the short time available. Therefore this issue can be representative only of part of the international interest in Wiggers and his work.

#### *Regional distribution*

Despite these practical problems it is remarkable how widespread the contributions are: they cover almost the entire geological scope of *Geologie en Mijnbouw* (mining is obviously absent). There are papers from most countries in NW Europe: Belgium (Paepe et al.), England (Jardine), Ireland (Synge), Sweden (Königsson) and, of course, The Netherlands (15 contributions). An even more interesting picture is given, however, by the areas involved in the research of the various authors. Apart from the countries mentioned above they include Denmark (Schwan & Van Loon), Germany (as part of NW Europe dealt with in various papers) and even Southern America (Van der Hammen).

#### *Subjects*

Wiggers' publications show his interest in many fields of Quaternary geology and physical geography. Fortunately this is expressed by the topics covered in this special issue. There are papers dealing with:

- sea-level changes (Jardine, De Jong & Mook, Van de Plassche);
- C-14 analyses (De Jong & Mook, Schoute et al., De Gans & Cleveringa);
- regional stratigraphy (Paepe et al., Synge, Vandenberghe & Krook, Paris et al., De Gans & Cleveringa);

- principles of Quaternary stratigraphy (Paepe et al., Van Loon);
- periglacial phenomena (Maarleveld, De Gans & Sohl);
- glacitectonics (Schwan & Van Loon);
- palaeontology (Königsson, Van der Hammen);
- palynology (Paris et al., De Gans & Cleveringa);
- sedimentary petrography (Bijlsma);
- sedimentary processes (Vugts & Cannemeijer);
- hydrology (De Vries);
- micromorphology (Schoute et al.);
- geomorphology and landscape analysis (Hof et al., Schwan & Van Loon);
- environmental changes (Van der Hammen);
- (last but not least) earth-science conservation (Gonggrijp & Boekschoten).

## EDITING

Wiggers not only was active in many fields of geology, but he also showed much interest in the 'proliferation' of knowledge. For a long time he has been the president of the editorial board of one of the most important Dutch general encyclopaedias. He also has been a member of the editorial board of 'Sedimentary Geology', a position which I inherited from him in 1975.

Two years later Wiggers agreed (I then worked in his department) when I asked him permission to become the editor-in-chief of *Geologie en Mijnbouw*. He not only agreed, but also encouraged me to spend much time in this time-consuming job. In this way Wiggers indirectly contributed to this journal. It is one more reason why I was pleased when the editorial board of this journal offered me the possibility to be the 'special editor' of this issue. I only could realise this task thanks to the authors; they closely cooperated with me to offer Wiggers this special farewell.