

Volkert S. van der Goot (1928-2001)

In Amsterdam on September 2nd 2001 Volkert van der Goot died at his home. The Dutch Dipterologists were shocked, since one of the most important innovators for the last 50 years disappeared suddenly. At least the last 25 years he spent his life full-time to investigate flies in all their dimensions; his private home was one file of Diptera. His base, the department Entomology of the Zoological Museum at Amsterdam, was the contact address he frequented almost each day, discussing the last developments, the recent captures and new literature. His important Syrphidae-collection was integrated in the collection of this museum 20 years ago; private honours were not important since he wished to stimulate others.

However, in the Netherlands he was the utmost source of information and education. After some years of investigation in 1954 he produced the first key on Syrphidae in the Dutch language. As this key was an innovating view in entomology, it was followed by four revised reprints. At the same time he published many times in *Entomologische Berichten*, forcing others to be active in the field, almost as in a competition to find new species for The Netherlands or to find new locations. He was the bench mark for at least three decades. At that moment he gave away an imperium to others and invested most of his time to other groups of Diptera. But in the same 50 years he was the reference point in the Netherlands too in the Asilidae, Stratiomyidae, Therevidae, Rhagionidae, Bombilydae, Micropezidae, Sciomyzidae, etc etc., publishing Dutch keys and adding reviews in systematics and distribution. Especially the last 15 years he used most of his time to investigate the family Empididae.

He was not very interested in systematics, nor in nomenclature ('use your time in a better way'), but had a very thorough opinion about that. For instance, if you can understand the Dutch language, read the paper on *Helophilus trivittatus* and you will be convinced that it is the correct name. Yet, as systematics were necessary to separate the species, he described new species to science such as *Syrphus friuliensis* ('60), *Platycheirus cintoensis* ('61), *Lampetia teruelensis* ('66), *Eumerus hispanicus* ('66), *Eumerus excisus* ('68), *Melanostoma abruzzensis* ('69) and *Lampetia abruzzensis* ('69). However, he was mainly interested in ecology and distribution. In my opinion an important publication is the one with Grabrandt in 1970, proving that *Platycheirus* species need grass-like species to feed on. A full review of his papers and activities is in preparation (*Entomologische Berichten*, Amsterdam).

Due to his knowledge of the Russian language, he decided to translate the keys of Stackelberg (1970). This became his master piece from 1981, to be used by most of the Syrphidae-investigators as a handbook. Stackelbergs' state of the art had been updated, adding west-European species and detailed information too; many new illustrations produced by Luc Verlinden were incorporated. This appeared to be the first book after Sack (1932), that included keys with species from a many countries in Europe and it was for that reason very important. Probably it was the correct integration of knowledge to start the major check on the description of the species in Europe again.

There was an enormous network in correspondence at the same time, assisting many others to identify species and to stimulate all kinds of research. The ones who were informed by his letters will understand what is meant. And there was no difference between the world-specialist and the beginning youth. He never forgot that research should be coupled with education, with the aim to stimulate others to investigate the Syrphidae. Not only the Dutch dipterologist society did loose a leading scientist, it also lost its teacher.

Aat Barendregt, Koninginnelaan 9, 3781 GK Voorthuizen, The Netherlands

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Barendregt Aat

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