



# IN MEMORIAM

## Professor Dr Douwe G. Yntema

(1948 - 2020)

When Douwe Yntema unexpectedly passed away on 28 March 2020, many people were left in shock – in the Netherlands, and in Italy, where his long-standing involvement in the archaeology of southern Italy and the Salento area in particular was highly valued. Following Douwe's death, Francesco D'Andria, emeritus professor of Archaeology at the Università del Salento (Lecce) and a close friend, almost instantly had an article published in the *Nuovo Quotidiano di Puglia* (3 April 2020), remarking that “*Il Salento perde un amico, grande, gentile e sapiente*”. Douwe belonged to a group of international scholars who had helped put the archaeology of southern Italy on the map and he played an instrumental role in leading it into a new direction, pleading for a stronger focus on landscape archaeology and pre-Roman, indigenous populations. But this was only one of his many merits, as he was also a capable manager (a term he detested) and an inspiring teacher. He published regularly in *BABESCH*, including a widely read article in 2000, in which he critically examined and compared the literary and archaeological evidence pertaining to early Greek colonies in south-eastern Italy.

Douwe Geert Yntema was born in Utrecht on 3 June 1948 as the son of a primary school teacher. After graduating secondary school in 1967 – ‘gymnasium  $\alpha$ ’ at Utrecht's Christelijk Gymnasium – he studied Classics and Archaeology at Utrecht University, before passing his so-called ‘kandidaatsexamen’ – similar to today's Bachelor's degrees – in Classics in 1971. In 1975, he obtained his master's degree *cum laude*, majoring in Archaeology with minors in Latin and Ancient History. During his doctoral studies, he would spend several months a year at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome as a bursary. After graduating, he was appointed to the position of scientific assistant of Classical Archaeology at the

Institute in Rome for a period of six months. In 1975, he was made assistant professor (‘wetenschappelijk medewerker’) at the Archaeological Centre of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In 1985 he received his doctoral degree *cum laude* after successfully defending his PhD thesis entitled *The matt-painted pottery of Southern Italy: a general survey of the matt-painted pottery styles of southern Italy during the final Bronze age and the Iron age* at the Vrije Universiteit under supervisor Professor Johannes (Hans) Boersma. After Boersma's early retirement, Douwe was appointed professor of Mediterranean Archaeology at the same university in 1998. From 2006 to 2011, he served as dean of the Vrije Universiteit's Faculty of Arts. In 2002, he was welcomed as a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; acting as the chair of the Humanities Domain from late 2009 to mid-2011 and serving, in that capacity, as vice-president and Academy Board Member. In 2007, he was elected as a member of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen. The oldest ‘learned’ society in the Netherlands, founded in 1752, this society aims to promote scientific research. Douwe retired from the Vrije Universiteit in 2013.

Douwe's interest in archaeological fieldwork – and archaeological surveys in particular – was manifest from the earliest stages of his academic career. In 1971 and 1972, Douwe joined the fieldwork project in Uzita, Tunisia, directed by Professor Jan Willem Salomonson, chair of the Archaeology Department of Utrecht University. Since 1960, Salomonson had carried out prospectations of Late Roman production sites of African Red Slip Ware in Tunisia and Algeria. Between 1970 and 1972, he organised three excavation campaigns at the ancient urban settlement of Uzita near present-day Sousse, bringing to light several Roman houses with peristyles and mosa-



Fig. 1 Douwe Yntema at the Goritsa survey in 1973 (photo: Reinder Reinders).

ics, a necropolis, a city wall of the Republican period and private and public baths.<sup>1</sup> Fellow students who also took part in this campaign included Arnold Beyer, Barbara Heldring and Ko Feye, who became a life-long friend of Douwe and was one of the driving forces behind the Utrecht Archaeological Institute. In 1973, Douwe joined the survey of Goritsa (fig. 1) led by Dr. Cees Bakhuizen, assistant professor of Ancient History at Utrecht University. The site had been home to a short-lived, fortified city of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, lying on a spur of Mt. Pelion on the northeast shore of the Gulf of Volos. Bakhuizen

assembled a team that would continue to work with him over the years, consisting of senior scholars such as Dr. Hans Boersma and Dr. G.J.M.J. te Riele, and a host of students and junior archaeologists, including Tom Bloemers, Ko Feije, Marjan Galestin, Barbara Heldring, Kees Neeft, Reinder Reinders, Paulien de Roever and Yvonne Goester. For many of them, the campaigns with Bakhuizen were a formative experience, and quite a few became active field archaeologists, as well as pursuing careers in academia. The working conditions during these campaigns were harsh, not in the least due to the AGET cement factory located at the foot of the hill that blew virtually invisible clouds of fine particles up to the acropolis. Douwe was in charge of the study of and publication on the so-called Great Battery, a structure that facilitated the use of heavy artillery to defend the city. The final publication, 'by the Goritsa Team', as was written on the front page, appeared in 1992, including a description of the Great Battery 'mainly by D.G. Yntema'.<sup>2</sup> Other fieldwork projects that Douwe joined after obtaining his bachelor's degree included excavations at the Roman site of De Meern in the Netherlands (1973) and Boersma's research project on the Domus del Protiro ('House of the Porch') in Ostia Region V – Insula II (1974).

During his studies, Douwe was also involved in the study and publication of antiquities in the Utrecht University collection, which is also how he became acquainted with indigenous Messapian or Apulian ceramics. Still a student, he published his first articles about this class of pottery, based on research carried out for his bachelor and master thesis and during his stays in Rome. His expertise in Messapian pottery was recognised from an early stage of his career onwards, which was one of the reasons for his close and long-lasting collaboration with Italian colleagues working in Salento, the heartland of the ancient Messapians. Although he was somewhat derogatory nicknamed *quello trozellaro* ('that trozella man') at first, a reference to a characteristic but quite ugly type of vessel in the repertoire of indigenous ceramics (fig. 2), he made his name as the leading authority on southern-Italian matt-painted pottery over time. After taking part in the excavations at Santa Maria di Leuca in 1975-1976, he was invited by D'Andria to participate in the newly established interdisciplinary project focusing on the indigenous site of Cavallino near Lecce. The project was a collaboration of the University of Lecce, the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and the École française à Rome. As D'Andria

remembers in his article in *Nuovo Quotidiano di Puglia*, Douwe's involvement added a Dutch component to this international project. Following on from this project, he joined the excavations of D'Andria et al. at Otranto, which marked the first time that stratified Greek and indigenous material was found together in contexts belonging to the 9<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. This was of great importance for the chronology of indigenous pottery styles and gave food for thought to rethink the earliest encounters between Greek visitors and local populations in the Iron Age. It was also of key importance for the publication of his study *The Matt-Painted Pottery of Southern Italy* in 1990, which constituted an updated and reworked version of his PhD thesis. This book provided the first manual for the classification and chronology of indigenous, painted pottery of southern Italy. It is still widely used as a standard reference work for this category of ceramics.

In his ceramic studies, Douwe tested his rigid typological analyses against stratigraphical data from a range of fieldwork contexts. In 1979, he started his own fieldwork project in Salento on behalf of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam together with Johannes Boersma. Over a period of 10 years, they organised yearly summer campaigns in the province of Brindisi, bringing with them dozens of Dutch archaeology students. The first campaigns concerned systematic field surveys of the countryside surrounding the town of Oria. Douwe was a fervent advocate of this field method, which was still in its experimental phase in the Mediterranean in those years. The Oria surveys proved to be a formidable source of information for the landscape history of the area from prehistorical times to the Middle Ages and in particular of the Messapian and Roman settlement patterns. Douwe's thorough analysis of these data was published in 1993, in the *Scrinium* series of Thesis Publishers, making it the first field survey project in southeast Italy to be systematically published. From 1984 until 1989, the focus shifted to excavations of the Messapian fortified site of Valesio. Whilst the excavations were directed by Marijke Gnade, Boersma interpreted the architecture of the Roman thermal complex in the midst of Valesio and Douwe studied the Messapian remains that came to light. The result was a large series of publications, among which Douwe's studies of Apulian black and grey gloss ceramics, based on the stratigraphy of the excavations, stand out. Both the Oria and Valesio projects were carried out with a formal permit from the Italian Ministry of Culture, in close collabora-

tion with the University of Lecce and the regional archaeological heritage board, then the *Soprintendenza per I Beni Archeologici della Puglia*. They became milestones in the archaeology of southeast Italy, as they shed significant light on the process of Romanisation of the indigenous Messapian tribes. These explorations were part of a much larger research project at the Vrije Universiteit on Romanisation, comparing the Brindisi province in Salento with northern frontier areas of the Roman Empire, as studied by Douwe's colleague Jan Sloftra. At the same time, this fieldwork set the scene for a broader Dutch regional fieldwork programme in Salento, which developed in the 1990s and 2000s and which is still running to this day, with field surveys and excavations throughout the larger so-called Isthmus of Salento, between Taranto and Brindisi.<sup>3</sup> Among the latter were the Muro Tenente and L'Amastuola

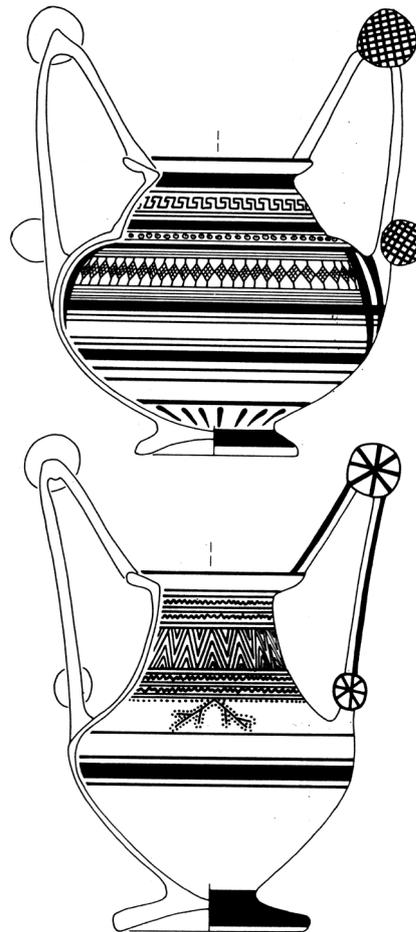


Fig. 2. Two trozella's (drawing by Douwe Yntema; after Yntema 1990, fig. 317).

Archaeological projects, directed by the present authors. These projects owe much to Douwe's ceramological knowledge, intellectual legacy and personal as well as professional networks.

Apart from producing high-level field reports and ceramic studies, Douwe was also a prolific writer of interpretative studies. His main focus was on the long-term landscape and settlement history of southeast Italy and in particular on the impact of processes such as Hellenisation and Romanisation on that history. He drew inspiration from currents that had earlier come into vogue in anthropologically oriented prehistoric archaeology, history and geography. Especially the so-called Processual Archaeology and Fernand Braudel's *histoire totale* had a major influence on Douwe at first. This can be recognised in his Oria book, for instance, but also in his later monograph *The Archaeology of South-East Italy in the First Millennium BC*, published in 2013 in the Amsterdam Archaeological Studies Series of Amsterdam University Press. Synthesising some 30 years of archaeological research, this book discusses how small tribal groups in southeast Italy developed into complex societies during the first millennium BC. It also highlights how these societies adapted to increasingly wide horizons, and why Italic groups and migrants from the eastern Mediterranean interacted and created entirely new social, economic, cultural and physical landscapes. Developing this approach as early as the 1980s, Douwe was one of the pioneers in the transition from Classical to Mediterranean Archaeology. Questioning the traditional, Classical archaeological bias towards Greek and Roman cities and High Culture, his focus was rather on the cities, landscapes, social groups, histories and material categories that were previously considered marginal; on city and countryside, centre and periphery, global and local, often in conjunction, in the context of more general historical themes such as colonisation, city and state formation, migration and Mediterranean interconnectivity.

In other, later works he was increasingly inspired by postcolonial theoretical debates, emphasising human agency, social identities and cognitive aspects instead of physical landscape and settlement processes. This is the case, for instance, in his 2009 book chapter on 'Material culture and plural identity in early Roman Southern Italy' and also in his much cited paper of 2000, titled 'Mental landscapes of colonization. The ancient written sources and the archaeology of early colonial-Greek south-eastern Italy'. The latter publication, as already referred to in the introduction, garnered ample attention and contributed to a fierce debate

on early Greek-indigenous relationships. In this paper, he takes a critical, deconstructivist approach to 'traditional' models of reading Greek colonisation in terms of a full-fledged colonial enterprise, to argue that it was only from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC that this model was projected onto the 'origins' of the early settlements, conceived and elaborated in terms of 'foundation narratives'. In reality, the early 'Greek' settlements would have originated mostly from 'private' initiatives of 'migration' by mostly mixed groups, welcomed by indigenous tribes. In Douwe's view, during the phase of first contact in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, Greek encounters with southeastern Italy in particular constituted a phenomenon that took place in the margins of a developing cultural and political landscape dominated by indigenous communities.

Douwe was unburdened by compartmental thinking. In the 1970s and '80s, when a deep divide between Classical archaeologists and prehistorians also characterized Dutch academia, he sought to bridge this gap by looking for common ground. This he found, for instance, in shared topics and methodologies, including processes of Romanisation in southern Italy and in the South of the Netherlands. This was also the theme of the inaugural lectures that he and his colleague Nico Roymans held in 1998 during a joint session to acknowledge their appointment as professors of Mediterranean and Northwest European archaeology, respectively.

Douwe's ability to think across the board was also manifest in his work for the Academy of Sciences. In 2006, he chaired a committee that set out to reconnoitre the changing position of archaeology in the Dutch academic landscape with the implementation of the Valetta treaty. The committee organised expert meetings with archaeologists working in the Netherlands and abroad. The report the committee published<sup>4</sup> demonstrated that, since the 1990s, the number of academic staff employed by universities had been reduced substantially, while numbers of archaeology students had increased dramatically and commercial archaeology continued to generate enormous amounts of data. This had made it increasingly impossible for university archaeologists to perform their main tasks: giving young field archaeologists the practical *and* intellectual training they needed to cope with the current situation, bringing together dispersed findings and writing synthesising studies, and producing images of the past that are meaningful for society at large. The committee recommended funding academic archaeology on an equal basis with the natural sciences, to make the

national research school of archaeology into a national platform for research, and give university-based archaeologists a preferential position to excavate sites that are instrumental for helping the academic field forward. Unfortunately, policy-makers did not follow these recommendations and many of the problems identified in the committee's report remain issues today.

Douwe was of the opinion that all academic staff, including professors, had a role to play in teaching, which he believed to be one of the core activities of academic life. He himself was a gifted and inspiring teacher, who had the ability to reduce complex matters to their very essence. As a dean, he remained a very approachable person and continued to build bridges. He can be considered the spiritual father of the Amsterdam Centre for Ancient Studies and Archaeology (ACASA), in which Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and University of Amsterdam collaborate to offer joint bachelor and master programmes.

Douwe had a clearly defined idea about how he wished to end his academic career, as he did not want to 'linger on' in academia for an indefinite period after his retirement. In his opinion, he had become out of touch with the field during the time he served as a dean and did not feel that he could catch up again. His retirement was almost a full stop. He could appreciate an initiative such as being awarded the Gran Premio Zeus Città di Ugento in 2018,<sup>5</sup> but was averse to any bigger events to celebrate his achievements or status. He vetoed our proposal to organise a two-day conference in his honour, even after we presented him the topic and venue we had in mind and the provisional list of speakers. He preferred reducing his farewell event to a small gathering for his closest colleagues with a limited number of speeches and dinner in an Italian restaurant in Amsterdam. In the years immediately before and after his retirement, he finished one last article on Greek colonisation and devoted the rest of his time to systematically going through the ancient sources, preferably lesser known or obscure writers, digging up all kinds of information about food provision, agricultural practices, land division and colonisation, slavery, public administration, or Gaul and the Gauls. He would then share his notes on these topics with his former colleagues in the departments of Archaeology and History. Somewhat to the astonishment of his colleagues in southern Italy, he never visited the country again – not even for guest lectures or vivas.<sup>6</sup> Instead, he went on long bike rides around

Amsterdam and talked enthusiastically about specific species of birds he spotted on his way.

Unfortunately, Douwe was not able to enjoy his retirement for very long. Afflicted with several illnesses during the last years of his life, he passed away on 28 March 2020. His career was one of great prestige and his studies have had a profound impact on Mediterranean archaeology and the archaeology of southeast Italy in particular. He continues to be a source of inspiration for his former colleagues and students, both in the Netherlands and in Italy. His intellectual legacy is still with us in our fieldwork and other research projects in Italy and Greece. However, we will remember him not only because of his academic achievements, but also because of his companionship and his amicable and warm personality, especially his dry, friendly humour and his aversion to intellectual arrogance.

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#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Hasenzagl 2017. See Docter 2021 for *In Memoriam* recordings of Salomonson.
- <sup>2</sup> Bakhuizen 1992.
- <sup>3</sup> Douwe also joined the Satricum project for a brief period in 1991 where he assisted in studying the pottery. He and the late Demetrius Waarsenburg distinguished a new category of bad-quality, grey pottery, which they dubbed Gnade ware – a term which is used at Satricum up to the present day.
- <sup>4</sup> K. Hilberdink and D. Yntema (eds.), *De toren van Pisa. Verslag van de Voorstudiecommissie Archeologie*, KNAW, Amsterdam, 2004; *De toren van Pisa recht gezet. Over de toekomst van de Nederlandse archeologie*, KNAW, Amsterdam, 2007.
- <sup>5</sup> In 2020 a special Premio Zeus was posthumously awarded in honour of Douwe Yntema.
- <sup>6</sup> In the article in *Nuovo Quotidiano di Puglia* D'Andria quotes from a letter Douwe wrote in reply to D'Andria's invitation to visit Lecce: "Finora non ho deciso di tornare in Italia. Le memorie di questa fase della mia vita sono bellissime... lascio il campo ai più giovani. Tocca a loro decidere sul future dell'archeologia e delle scienze umane".

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