



IN MEMORIAM PIETER BAAS, 1944-2024

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Abstract / Izvleček

Izvleček: Mednarodna skupnost za anatomijo lesa žaluje, ker nas je zapustil prof. dr. Pieter Baas (28. april 1944–29. april 2024) iz Nizozemske. Bil je ključna osebnost Mednarodnega združenja lesnih anatomov (IAWA) in desetletja urednik revije IAWA Journal. Več kot štiri desetletja je izjemno prispeval k razvoju anatomije lesa. S svojim življenjem, delom in izjemnimi osebnostnimi lastnostmi je prispeval k rasti in povezanosti svetovne skupnosti IAWA.

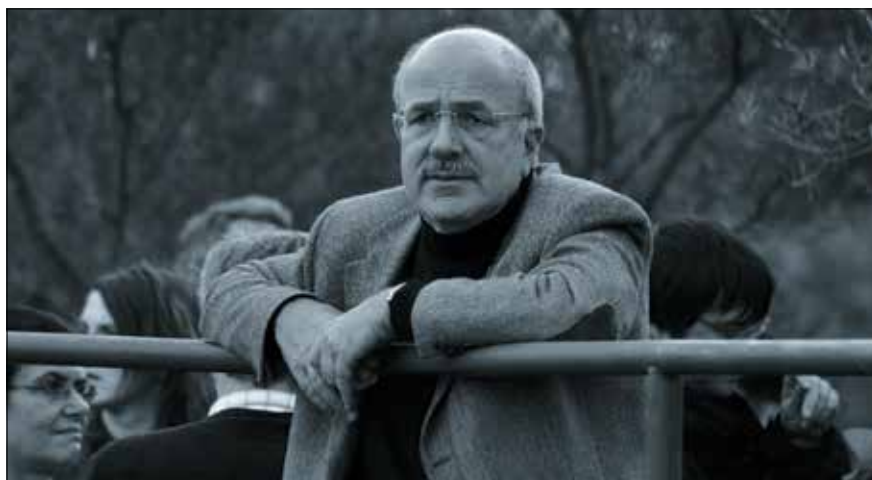
Ključne besede: Pieter Baas, in memoriam, anatomija lesa, IAWA = International Association of Wood Anatomists, IAWA Journal

Abstract: The international wood anatomy community mourns the loss of Prof. Dr Pieter Baas (28 April 1944–29 April 2024) from the Netherlands. He was a key figure in the International Association of Wood Anatomists (IAWA) and editor of the *IAWA Journal* for decades. He made an outstanding contribution to the development of wood anatomy and wood science for more than four decades. His life, work and outstanding personal qualities have contributed to the growth and connection of the worldwide wood anatomy community.

Keywords: Pieter Baas, in memoriam, wood anatomy, IAWA = International Association of Wood Anatomists, *IAWA Journal*

Mednarodno skupnost za anatomijo lesa je pretresla vest, da nas je za vedno zapustil prof. dr. Pieter Baas (28. april 1944–29. april 2024) (slika 1). Več kot štiri desetletja je bil ključna osebnost in je izjemno prispeval k razvoju anatomije in znanosti o lesu, pa tudi anatomije rastlin in gozdarstva. Njegovo življenjsko pot, delo in izjemne osebnostne lastnosti so opisali njegovi najbližji sodelavci in sodelavke (Van Welzen et al., 2024; Wheeler et al., 2024), posvečena pa mu bo tudi posebna številka revije IAWA Journal v letu 2025.

Pieter Baas se je rodil na Nizozemskem ter študiral biologijo na Univerzi Leiden, kjer je diplomiral leta 1965 in magistriral leta 1969. Za anatomijo lesa se je začel specializirati že med dodiplomskim študijem (Van Welzen et al., 2024). Po magisteriju se je leta 1969 zaposlil kot lesni anatom v nacionalnem herbariju Rijksherbarium, ki je spadal pod Univerzo Leiden. Leta 1975 je doktoriral in leta 1987 postal izredni profesor sistematične anatomije rastlin. Leta 1991 je postal znanstveni direktor ustanove Rijksherbarium in profesor sistematične botanike.



Slika 1. Pieter Baas na ekskurziji v okviru srečanja ISWS, Montpellier, Francija, 2004 (Foto: dovoljenje Peter Gasson).

Figure 1. Pieter Baas on a conference tour of the ISWS meeting in Montpellier, France, 2004 (Photo: courtesy Peter Gasson).

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Od leta 1993 se je moral boriti za ohranitev herbarija in lesne zbirke, saj so ju želeli ukiniti. Pieter Baas je dosegel, da so leta 1999 zbirko vključili v novoustanovljeni Nacionalni herbarij Nizozemske (NHN) in postal prvi direktor ustanove. Pripomogel je, da je nastal današnji Center za biotsko raznovrstnost Naturalis v Leidnu. Pieter Baas se je upokojil leta 2005. Kot zaslužni profesor je ostal predan znanosti. Ostal je znanstveno dejaven na širokem področju anatomije lesa in povezan z mednarodno skupnostjo, ki je po njegovi zaslugi ves čas rasla in postala zelo povezana (Van Welzen et al., 2024; Wheeler et al., 2024).

Pomen dela Pietra Baasa je razviden iz njegove obsežne bibliografije in številnih prestižnih nagrad in priznanj (Van Welzen et al., 2024; SCOPUS, 2024), veličine njegovih zaslug pa sploh ni mogoče izmeriti. Pieter Baas je v društvu IAWA, ki so ga ustanovili že leta 1931, deloval od leta 1976. Med leti 1976 in 1981 je bil izvršni sekretar IAWA. Od 1980 do 2019 je bil glavni urednik revije, ki je v preteklosti izhajala pod različnimi imeni, med drugim IAWA Bulletin new series in od leta 1993 IAWA Journal (Baas & Wheeler, 2019). IAWA Journal je vodilna znanstvena revija na področju anatomije lesa, ki je z urednikom Pietrom Baasom nenehno pridobivala na kakovosti. Tehnično brežhibno jo je desetletja urejala Emma van Nieuwkoop (1933–2022) (Wheeler et al. 2004; IAWA, 2004).

Pieter Baas je bil najbolj prepoznavna osebnost društva IAWA in največji zagovornik mednarodnega sodelovanja. Sodeloval je pri organizaciji konferenc IAWA ali sekcij IAWA v okviru velikih simpozijev po vsem svetu (slika 2). Posebnost vseh IAWA konferenc so bile legendarne družabne ure (social hours), ki so udeležencem formalnih konferenc omogočile neformalne stike (slika 3). Prav zaradi izjemnih osebnostnih lastnosti, družabnosti in karizme je Pieter pripomogel, da je na njih vedno vladalo dobro razpoloženje in da so se vsi počutili sprejete. Mednarodna skupnost za anatomijo lesa je zato postala kot velika družina, kjer so nastajali skupni projekti in objave ter trajna prijateljstva. Pieter je običajno imel nagovore in bil zadolžen za zahvale organizatorjem, pri čemer smo vedno občudovali njegovo izjemno angleščino. Velikodušno je spodbujal mlade znanstvenice in znanstvenike, sprejemal nove člane IAWA, prodajal revije IAWA in se pogovarjal z vsemi. Imel je izjemen spomin za



Slika 2. Pieter Baas s kolegi na ekskurziji v Camargue v Provansi v okviru simpozija ISWS International Symposium on Wood Sciences, Montpellier 2004.

Figure 2. Pieter Baas and colleagues on a field trip to Camargue, Provence, as part of the ISWS International Symposium on Wood Sciences, Montpellier 2004.

obrazce in imena. S svojim delovanjem je vzpostavil model, kako voditi svetovno društvo in kako poskrbeti, da se ljudje med seboj spoznajo, drug drugega sprejemajo in resnično sodelujejo.

Izjemne podpore smo bili deležni tudi znanstvenice in znanstveniki iz Slovenije, ki smo se kakorkoli ukvarjali z anatomijo lesa. V letu 1983 sta se prof. dr. Niko Torelli in Katarina Čufar udeležila simpozija IAWA IUFRO Wood Anatomy Meeting v Hamburgu (Ter Welle, 1983) ter tam spoznala Pietra Baasa in vse takratne evropske vodilne znanstvenice in znanstvenike na področju anatomije lesa. Torelli in Čufar sta se takrat vpisala v društvo IAWA in začela prejemati tiskano verzijo revije IAWA Bulletin n.s. ter kasneje IAWA Journal. V času brez interneta je revija z znanstvenimi članki in ključnimi obvestili o dogodkih in članstvu bila skupaj s konferencami ključna za vzdrževanje stika s stroko in člani IAWA. Pieter Baas je dvakrat obiskal Oddelek za lesarstvo BF UL v Ljubljani, najprej za uskladitev priprave in nato kot soorganizator IAWA in IUFRO S 5.01 simpozija na 18. svetovnem kongresu IUFRO, ki so ga leta 1986 organizirali v Cankarjevem domu v Ljubljani. Simpozij je imel naslov »The effects of environmental pollution on wood structure and quality«. Takrat je znanstvena skupnost ugotovila, da za proučevanje propadanja drevja zaradi sprememb okolja potrebujemo več znanja o fiziologiji drevja, kar je vplivalo tudi na kasnejši razvoj in usmeritev raziskav na Oddelku za lesarstvo. Po simpoziju v Ljubljani so organizirali tudi tradicionalni IAWA meeting in dru-

žabni dogodek, kjer sta bila lokalna organizatorja Torelli in Čufar (Shortle, 1986). Pieter Baas je nato z nami ostal v osebnih in seveda profesionalnih stikih. Z društvom IAWA so se kasneje povezali vsi, ki so delovali (in delujejo) na področju anatomije lesa, Primož Oven, Jožica Gričar, Maks Merela, Peter Prislan, Angela Balzano in drugi. Niko Torelli, Katarina Čufar, Jožica Gričar in Angela Balzano so v reviji IAWA Bulletin n.s. oz. IAWA Journal objavili svoj prvi znanstveni članek s faktorjem vpliva (Scopus, 2024), revija pa je še vedno zelo pomembna za objavo njihovih del. Pieter Baas je bil kot urednik v stiku z avtorji v vseh fazah od oddaje prispevka do objave. Znanstvenice in znanstveniki iz Slovenije so sodelovali tudi v uredniških odborih ter kot recenzentke in recenzenti, srečevali smo se tudi v okviru COST akcije STREeSS in drugih dogodkov.

Angela Balzano in Maks Merela sta se srečala s Pietrom Baasom tudi na konferenci »From Forests to Heritage« aprila 2022 v Amsterdamu. Skupaj so bili med nepozabnim izletom z ladjico po amsterdamskih kanalih. Medtem ko je Pieter Baas užival v svojih priljubljenih »bitterballen« in kozarcu vina, je kolegicam in kolegom na poseben način predstavil Amsterdam ter z njimi delil smeh in zgodbe (slika 4).

Pieter Baas je bil aktiven znanstvenik do konca. Kljub bolezni je bil skupaj z Yafang Yinom in Veronico de Micco soorganizator simpozija IAWA z naslovom "The Contribution of Wood in Forests: From Wood Dynamics to Trait Diversity and Carbon Gains" v okviru XX. mednarodnega botaničnega kongresa v Madridu. Žal se Pieter Baas kongresa v juniju 2024 ni mogel več udeležiti, s čimer je na dogodku in na področju, ki ga je tako strastno promoviral, ostala globoka praznina.

Kot so sporočili, je na svoj 80. rojstni dan z velikim veseljem prebiral e-poštna voščila prijateljc in prijateljcev z vsega sveta. Na ta sporočila izjemoma nismo prejeli odgovorov, saj je že naslednji dan prišla vest, da se je za vedno poslovil.

Vsi, ki smo imeli srečo, da smo ga osebno poznali, se ga bodo spominjali kot navdihujoče osebnosti s čudovitim smislom za humor. Pogrešali bomo njegovo elegantno angleščino, njegovo izjemno znanje in neukrotljivega duha, njegove talente, pa tudi skromnost in prijaznost.

The wood anatomy community is mourning the loss of Prof. Dr Pieter Baas (28 April 1944 – 29 April 2024) (Figure 1) who passed away in Leiden,

the Netherlands, just one day after he celebrated his 80th birthday. For more than four decades he was a key personality in the field of wood anatomy. He has made an outstanding contribution to the development of wood and plant anatomy, wood science, and forestry. His work has been recognized nationally and internationally. He was a key figure in the International Society of Wood Anatomy, IAWA, in which he was active since 1976. He was executive secretary and for many years editor of the *IAWA Journal*. His life, work and outstanding personal qualities have been described by those closest to him (Van Welzen et al., 2024; Wheeler et al., 2024), and a special issue of the *IAWA Journal* will be dedicated to him in 2025.

Pieter Baas, born in the Netherlands, studied biology at Leiden University, and obtained Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in 1965 and 1969, respectively. During his master's work he started to specialize in wood anatomy (Van Welzen et al., 2024). He received a scholarship to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in London, and became very skilled in the English language, which we all admired. After his MS degree in 1969 he started to work as wood anatomist at the Rijksherbarium (National Herbarium) which was a part of Leiden University. In 1975 he received a PhD and in 1987 he became an Extraordinary Professor of Systematic Plant Anatomy at the same university. In 1991 he became scientific director of the Rijksherbarium and professor of systematic botany at Leiden University. Starting in 1993, he engaged in a six-year struggle to preserve the herbarium and wood collection. In 1999 the Rijksherbarium and the herbaria of Utrecht University and Wageningen University were merged to form the National Herbarium of the Netherlands (NHN), with Pieter as its first director. Later Pieter began discussions of merging all biodiversity collections in the Netherlands, resulting in today's Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden. In 2000 he became a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected a fellow of the International Academy of Wood Science and a corresponding member of the Botanical Society of America. In 2023, he won the Linnean Medal of the Linnean Society of London, and he became a Knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion in 2005. Although Pieter official retired on 1 April 2005 and became a professor emeritus, he

remained scientifically active in wood anatomical research (Van Welzen et al., 2024; Wheeler et al., 2024). He continued his work as an editor and never stopped providing advice to anybody who asked for it. He remained active and involved in wood anatomical projects until almost his last day. He has greatly contributed to the field of wood anatomy, and left us an impressive bibliography (e.g., Scopus, 2024).

Pieter Baas was especially known to international community as the Executive Secretary of IAWA between 1976 – 1981. From 1980 -2019 he ran the *IAWA Bulletin New Series*, later the *IAWA Journal* (Baas & Wheeler, 2019) as editor in tight cooperation with Emma van Nieuwkoop (1933–2022), desk editor in the Rijksherbarium (Wheeler et al., 2024; IAWA, 2024).

As the key person at the IAWA he was the greatest advocate of international collaboration. He was involved in the organization of IAWA conferences or IAWA sessions as a part of large symposia all over the world (Figure 2). They were always accompanied by IAWA social events where Pieter's personal qualities, friendliness and charisma always contributed to their success. He was the one making toasts and thanking the organizers, generously encouraging young scientists, welcoming new IAWA members, selling IAWA publications and chatting with everyone (Figure 3). In this way he established a model of how to run a worldwide society and how to make sure that the people involved know each other and really cooperate.

All scientists from Slovenia who deal with wood anatomy came into contact with Pieter Baas and the IAWA. In 1983, Prof. Dr Niko Torelli and Katarina Čufar attended the IAWA IUFRO Wood Anatomy Meeting in Hamburg and met Pieter and all the leading European scientists in the field of wood anatomy at that time (Ter Welle, 1983). Torelli and Čufar became members of the IAWA and began receiving the printed version of the *IAWA Bulletin, New Series*, and later the *IAWA Journal*. In the pre-internet era, the *IAWA Journal* with its scientific articles and important announcements on events and membership, together with the conferences, was crucial for enabling Slovenian scientists to stay in touch with the profession and other IAWA members. Pieter visited the Department of Wood Science and Technology at the Biotechnical Faculty of

the University of Ljubljana (DWST BF UL) twice. The first visit was to prepare and the second to execute the IAWA and IUFRO S 5.01 Symposium at the 18th IUFRO World Congress held in Ljubljana, then still part of Yugoslavia, in September 1986. The symposium was entitled "The Effects of Environmental Pollution on Wood Structure and Quality", and Peter helped to organise the IAWA satellite meeting and social hour, with Torelli and Čufar as local organisers (Shortle, 1986). Shortle reports that the members sat in silence during the IAWA business meeting. However, a miraculous change came over the members and their guests once the social hour began after the formal meeting. Once the anatomists began loosening themselves with fine wines and building up their carbohydrate and protein reserves with fruits and cheeses, they broke their silence, and a good time was had by all in attendance.

Afterwards, Pieter remained in personal and, of course, professional contact with the scientists from Slovenia. All those who worked in the field of wood anatomy in Ljubljana – Primož Oven, Jožica Gričar, Maks Merela, Peter Prislan, Angela Balzano



Slika 3. Pieter Baas, Manuela Romagnoli (levo) in Katarina Čufar (desno) na gala večerji konference International symposium on wood structure in plant biology and ecology, April 2013, Neapelj, Italija, v okviru COST akcije STREeSS.

Figure 3. Pieter Baas, Manuela Romagnoli (left) and Katarina Čufar (right) at the Gala Dinner of the International Symposium on Wood Structure in Plant Biology and Ecology, 17-20 April 2013, Napoli, Italy in the framework of the COST Action STREeSS.

and others – were committed to the IAWA. Katarina Čufar, Jožica Gričar and Angela Balzano published their first scientific articles with an impact factor in the *IAWA Journal* (e.g. Scopus, 2024) which remains a distinguished journal in their resumes. As editor, Peter was in contact with the authors at all stages of the process, from submission to publication. The scientists from Ljubljana also participated in editorial boards and as reviewers and met Pieter regularly as part of the COST Action STREeSS.

Angela Balzano and Maks Merela also met Pieter Baas at the “From Forests to Heritage” conference in Amsterdam in April 2022. They went on an unforgettable boat trip together on the canals of Amsterdam (Figure 4). While Pieter enjoyed his favourite *bitterballen* and a glass of wine, he introduced his colleagues to Amsterdam in a special way and shared laughs and stories with them.

Pieter was an active scientist until the end. Despite his illness, he co-organized with Yafang Yin and Veronica de Micco the IAWA Symposium “The Contribution of Wood in Forests: From Wood Dynamics to Trait Diversity and Carbon Gains” for the XX International Botanical Congress in Madrid. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the congress, which took place in June 2024, leaving a deep void at the event and in the field that he so passionately promoted throughout his career.

On his 80th birthday, he was delighted to receive email greetings from his wood anatomy friends from all over the world. This year, however,

we did not receive an email with his thanks, but instead the very next day we received the news that we had lost him forever.

All of us who were fortunate enough to know Peter personally will remember him as an inspiring personality with a wonderful sense of humour. We will miss his extraordinary knowledge, his spirit, talents, elegance and kindness. Pieter Baas will be remembered and missed by us all.

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Slika 4. Pieter Baas (desno zadaj), Paolo Cherubini, Elisabeth Wächter (levo) in Angela Balzano (desno) med vožnjo po kanalih Amsterdama v okviru konference »From Forests to Heritage« aprila 2022.

Figure 4. Pieter Baas (right), Paolo Cherubini, Elisabeth Wächter (left) and Angela Balzano (right) during a ride through the canals of Amsterdam as part of the “From Forests to Heritage” conference in April 2022.