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In memoriam Max Michael Josephus van Balgooy (1932–2021)

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On 3 September 2021 Max van Balgooy passed away, just 3 weeks after his 89th birthday. On the occasion of his 80th birthday we published a *laudatio*, which also gave a concise biography (Baas et al. 2012), which we will not repeat in detail. Here we will focus on the achievements of his last nine years and borrow from his own reminiscences (in Dutch: *Herinneringen*), privately published 40 days after his death by his family (Van Balgooy 2021) following the Indonesian tradition to commemorate the demise of a loved one after this period. Max choose to leave his bodily remains to science, so there has been no funeral or farewell meeting.

In his reminiscences – full of remarkable anecdotes – Max characteristically devoted very little attention to his academic career. Instead he recorded notable field observations from early life on and around the farm of his father and stepmother in Purwokerto (central Java) up to his latest field trips.

In 1958 Max came to the Netherlands to study Biology in Leiden where he specialised in zoological, ecological, ethological and phytogeographical subjects for his MSc. In his collection of anecdotes, *Steenisiana*, published in 1972 on the occasion of Prof. CGGJ van Steenis's retirement, he would recall how he was examined by the great professor riding a bike. Van Steenis also typed his manuscript while Max dictated, and told the other professors of Biology after Max's MSc examination to stay away from him, as 'he was his'.

Already during his studies in Indonesia Max organised trips and expeditions. One of the trips was to the Anak Krakatau volcano, between Sumatra and Java, which erupted when the students returned to Jakarta. During his botanical career Max organised many expeditions worldwide (Papua New Guinea, Lord Howe Island, Hawaii, Malaysia, Philippines, Buru, West Borneo, the Aru Islands, New Zealand, Australia, China, New Caledonia, South Africa, etc.) whereby he cleverly used his contacts, for instance to get free transport in a military Hercules transport plane to Sulawesi (Fig. 1). In 1974/75 he could combine field work in Malaysia with a visiting Professorship in Kuala Lumpur. Perhaps one of his more memorable trips was to Tahiti, where Max rediscovered *Fuchsia cyrtandroides* J.W.Moore (*Onagraceae*), a tree that stopped him when he accidentally fell down a steep slope. On its branches grew a rare liverwort, *Treubia* spec., that was also on Max's collecting wish list. The rich material collected during this trip would be transported to the Netherlands with the boat 'Maori', of which Max heard to his dismay, when he was back home, that it had sunk in the Gulf of Biscay. Later a message came from Tahiti that the postal service had not succeeded in sending his collections with the 'Maori', they safely arrived later with another boat.

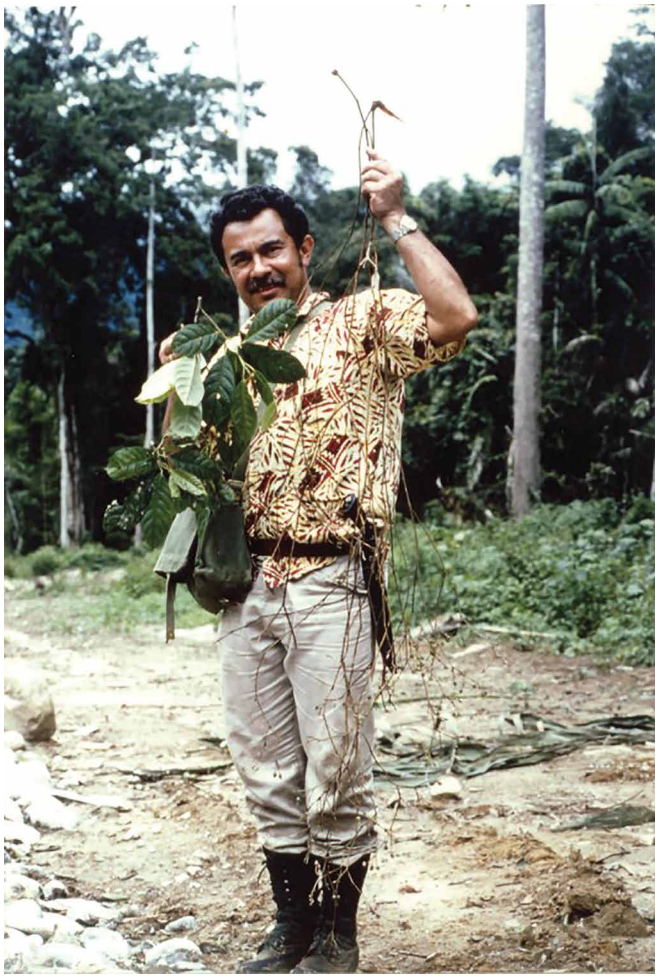

Fig. 1 Max collecting an inflorescence of a *Saurauia* (*Actinidiaceae*) during the Sulawesi expedition (Indonesia, 1979). Photographer unknown.

After his early retirement in 1994, Max continued to work full time as Honorary Staff at the Rijksherbarium/Hortus botanicus, which he saw merging with the Utrecht and Wageningen herbaria to form the National Herbarium of the Netherlands and then being absorbed into the Naturalis Biodiversity Center. He was much concerned about the associated rapid decline in Leiden of SE Asian botany and alpha taxonomy and the consequent lack of knowledge transfer to younger generations. His focus remained the identification of the large numbers of incoming Malesian

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Fig. 2 Max identifying his collections in his room in the Van Steenis building (Leiden, The Netherlands, 3 July 2008). Photo: Jaap de Vlas.

plant collections (Fig. 2) and to help develop modern tools and databases for plant identification. It gave Max much pleasure to engage with colleagues Yee Wen Low and Khoon Meng Wong in Singapore on a fully revised and richly illustrated version of 'Spot-characters for the identification of Malesian seedplants, a guide', published in 2015. He also collaborated with the SE Asia group in Kew and Jeannette Ridder-Numan and others in Leiden to perfect the digital keys to Malesian plant families and genera in the Linnaeus software of Naturalis. For a long time Max was in charge of weekly identification sessions, during which his sense of humour and mischievous pranks (some detailed also in his reminiscences) often resulted in putting the knowledge of family specialists to the test. Great fun when the specialist failed. One of his last identifications projects was together with Susana Arias Guerrero. The two identified the collections from Weda Bay, Halmahera, Moluccas, Indonesia. This was part of an environmental survey for a future nickel mine site. One of the results was the discovery of a new *Euphorbiaceae* genus *Weda*, with two new, very locally occurring species that accumulate manganese (Van Welzen et al. 2021). The whole genus is likely already extinct as opencast mining has started.

Helping others was a leading thread in all Max's botanical activities in the last decade of his active life. Among the beneficiaries were Jaap de Vlas and his wife Johanna de Vlas-de Jong, whose fabulous collection of photographs of plants from Sri Lanka he helped to identify, so that a three volume 'Illustrated field guide to the flowers of Sri Lanka' (De Vlas & De Vlas-de Jong, 2008–2019) could be published. Volume 3 includes many as yet undescribed species new to science, and only identified down to genus level. That last volume will be a treasure trove for specialists to find new species.

Fig. 3 Max on Bali (Indonesia), demonstrating hyperparasitism, a half-parasitic *Viscum* on a half-parasitic *Loranthaceae*, to Jens Mogens Olesen and Dennis Hansen (November 2006). Photo: Jens Mogens Olesen.

Fig. 4 Max showing a flowering specimen of *Medinilla tapete-magicum* Cámara-Leret & Veldkamp in the Eka Karya Botanical Garden on Bali, a new species (April 2017). Max collected the type (*Van Balgooy 7557*, L) from this treelet. The plant came originally from Sulawesi. Photo: Susana Arias Guerrero.

Max had been diagnosed in 2001 with metastased prostate cancer, which the doctors successfully managed to get under control. The same could not be said of his encounter with a very serious form of shingles, which brought him close to death's door (in 2015), and after which he chronically endured horrific neuralgic pains. This did not prevent him from attending the most recent Flora Malesiana Symposium in Brunei 2019, where all delegates gave him a standing ovation at the closing session for being such a fine *pater familias* of the extended Flora Malesiana network.

In his final years, while alternately living on Bali (Fig. 3, 4) and in the Netherlands, under increasing sedation of ever stronger pain killers, Max still made life worth living by training his mind with identification puzzles of mystery plants, which he exchanged with colleagues in Kew and Edinburgh coordinated by Tim Utteridge and including old friends such as Mark Coode and John Dransfield. He also wrote short reminiscences of his fieldwork adventures in New Guinea, Sulawesi, Borneo and Tahiti for the magazine *Pelitanieuws*, a periodical for and by citizens in the Netherlands with historical links with Indonesia (Van Balgooy 2020 and 2021 in the bibliography). In the last posthumously published instalment he philosophically recorded that the New Caledonian genus *Balgoya* (*Polygalaceae*) had been reduced to *Moutabea*: "it was fun as long as it lasted…". In his last years he also penned down his *Herinneringen*.

How much Max was still alive in the botanical community is also demonstrated by the publication, five days after he passed away, of a new species, *Cyrtandra balgooyi* H.J.Atkins & Karton. (*Gesneriaceae*), by friends and colleagues from Edinburgh and Bogor.

Throughout, Max did not lose his great sense of humour. Every time we met he had a rich harvest of stories to tell of his adventures in the field and encounters with botanists past and present.

We will terribly miss Max, as one of the last disciples of CGGJ van Steenis and a great naturalist in his own right. Our condolences go to his wife Helga and son Richard and his family.

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EPONYMY OF MAX VAN BALGOOY

Botany

Genera:

Polygalaceae	*Balgoya* Morat & Meijden (= *Moutabea* Aubl., see above)

Species:

Araceae	*Alocasia balgooyi* A.Hay
	Rhaphidophora balgooyi P.C.Boyce
Begoniaceae	*Begonia balgooyi* D.C.Thomas & Ardi
Elaeocarpaceae	*Elaeocarpus balgooyi* Coode
Ericaceae	*Diplycosia balgooyi* Argent
Euphorbiaceae	*Acalypha balgooyi* Sagun & G.A.Levin
	Trigonostemon balgooyi R.Y.Yu & Welzen
Geraniaceae	*Geranium balgooyi* Veldkamp
Gesneriaceae	*Cyrtandra balgooyi* H.J.Atkins & Karton.
Myrtaceae	*Syzygium balgooyi* Brambach, Byng, Culmsee
Oleaceae	*Chionanthus balgooyanus* Kiew
Phyllanthaceae	*Phyllanthus balgooyi* Petra Hoffm. & A.J.M.Baker
Poaceae	*Eragrostis balgooyi* Veldkamp
Polypodiaceae	*Lecanopteris balgooyi* Hennipman
Rosaceae	*Eriobotrya balgooyi* K.M.Wong & Ent
Rutaceae	*Melicope balgooyi* Appelhans, W.L.Wagner & K.R.Wood
	Melicope maxii T.G.Hartley
Zingiberaceae	*Alpinia maxii* R.M.Sm.

Zoology

Hymenoptera, *Braconidae*	*Canalirogas balgooyi* van Achterberg & Chen, 1996
Lepidoptera, *Hepialidae*	*Oxycanus balgooyi* Tindale, 1968

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