

**Life as Entomologist.
Studying Insects, Arachnids
and Millipedes,
and Other Stuff**

Antonius van Harten

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Dedicated to my wife, Nair, and my children
Sofia, Vilma, Raoul, Djamila, Dulce and Felix.

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 PROLOGUE



For most scientists who have accompanied Antonius van Harten for shorter or longer times during his working life, he was or is just „Tony“, a good colleague and often a friend. – In 2007 I travelled for the first time to the United Arab Emirates. Frank Menzel and I were invited by Tony to be part of the exploration of the invertebrate fauna of the country. Tony mastered the horrible traffic in the futuristic urban areas, and brought us safely in a large pickup to many localities where a rich and special entomofauna could be expected. During his professional career he developed a vast knowledge of how to use different methods to analyse invertebrate communities. Until 2004, he was active in various crop protection projects in African countries (Angola, Cape Verde) and in Yemen. In the 1990s he also worked in several South Pacific Island States (Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, etc.). The detection and multiplication of organisms suitable for biological control of crop pests was a main topic during his professional career. His broad experience allowed him to recognise suitable habitats, and his enormous knowledge of all kind of insects and other invertebrates made him to be the right person to address such a large enterprise as the exploration of the fauna of a faunistically rather unknown terrain: the United Arab Emirates. We all have learned from him! Like many other colleagues he supervised during their journeys to the UAE, I was really amazed by the enormous number of different insect groups he distributed to specialists. His prediction, that in those hot arid environments light traps would be a suitable method to collect rare and seldomly seen insects – aside from the „usual suspects“ like nocturnal moths – was received by many of us with some scepticism. His success proved him right!

In unravelling the account of his life, Tony allows us to be contemporary witnesses of history. In the second half of the 20th century agricultural projects played an important role in international cooperation. Sometimes, Tony's descriptions seem to come from a vanished world. International congresses that focused on biological control were memorable events. Broad knowledge of biodiversity was the key to success in overcoming the challenges of the field.

In this book, Tony shows stamps from Cape Verde and Yemen that illustrate examples of the arthropod fauna of those countries. It was – by the way – also a stamp which came to my mind, when I stood with my sweep-net on the sea shore of Ras al Khaima. Collecting stamps was common for us teenagers in the 1960s. I had obtained a stamp showing a dhow, a historic sailboat, from a country with the romantic and exotic name of Ras al Khaima. Now I found myself there, I saw no dhows, but later, in the harbour of Sharjah, we spotted some: Thank you, Tony!

Andreas Stark

Dr. Andreas Stark

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