

## PREFACE

2013 was a very special year for the radiocarbon laboratory at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) in Brussels. Exactly 50 years ago, in 1963, the first gas proportional counter was delivered to the institute. This meant the start of our  $^{14}\text{C}$  laboratory. Fifty years later, in March 2013, the institute installed the first AMS machine (MICADAS) in Belgium. We did not have time to celebrate our new acquisition because we had to organize the “7th International Radiocarbon and Archaeology” symposium, which took place a month later. It was the first radiocarbon symposium ever held in Belgium. The fact that these two events and the anniversary occurred in the same year was a mere coincidence. In fact, the MICADAS should have arrived in December of the preceding year and the Radiocarbon and Archaeology meeting was originally planned for 2014. But during the previous meeting in Paphos, we were asked to organize the meeting one year earlier so that the Radiocarbon conference, the AMS conference, and the Radiocarbon & Archaeology symposium would all fall in different years. Although we accepted to reschedule the meeting, we were afraid that for many people the new date would be too early. Our fear was, however, unjustified because we welcomed 150 participants in Ghent.

The conference was held at the Chapter House of the former Saint Peter’s abbey in the historic center of Ghent. It was an ideal place for modern science to meet with history. The papers published in this volume of *Radiocarbon* reflect very well the variety of topics discussed in this meeting. Archaeology covers an enormous gamut of different cultures from even more regions of the world. All of them need specific approaches, sampling techniques, data evaluation, etc. So it was interesting to see that monographic sessions became a very important part of the conference. These sessions allow smaller research groups to communicate their experiences with a broader group of colleagues.

The organization of this symposium was a joint venture of the radiocarbon laboratory of KIK-IRPA and the Department of Archaeology of Ghent University (UGent). This was the result of a long tradition of collaboration. Financial and technical support was provided by FWO (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek–Vlaanderen), BELSPO (Belgian Federal Science Policy Office), Historische Huisen Gent, PAM Velzeke (Provinciaal Archeologisch Museum Velzeke), KIK-IRPA, and UGent. For the organization of the symposium we could rely on a very enthusiastic and creative team: Louise Decq, MSc (KIK/IRPA); Jeroen Verhegge, PhD student (UGent); Guy De Mulder, postdoctoral researcher (UGent); Mathieu Boudin (KIK-IRPA), PhD student; Ariane Raman (UGent); and Debby Van den Bergh, secretary (UGent).

We would like to thank the reviewers for their critical input to improve the proceedings of this meeting. A special thanks also to Guy De Mulder for joining us as a guest editor and to Mark McClure and Prof. Tim Jull for their help in the preparation of these proceedings.

And finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all participants of the conference for the interesting presentations and good company.

We hope to see you all in Edinburgh in 2016,

*Mark Van Strydonck and Philippe Crombé*









