

SARTON CHAIR LECTURES
1992-93

LAUDATIO ANGELA F. von den DRIESCH

*Joseph Karel Hoorens**

As the representative of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine it is my privilege to introduce to you the laureate of the George Sarton Memorial Chair 1992-93 : Professor Angela Felicitas von den Driesch.

Mrs. von den Driesch obtained the Doctor's degree in 1963 with a study of the anatomy of the lymphatic vascular system. Following graduation, she was appointed assistant at the Institute of Animal Anatomy of the University of Munich, where she continued her investigations on lymph circulation in the interstitium of a variety of animal organs.

When, in 1965, the *Institut für Palaeoanatomie, Domestikationsforschung und Geschichte der Tiermedizin* was founded at the Maximilian-Universität München Dr. von den Driesch became assistant to the director of the Institute, Prof. Dr. med. vet. J. Boessneck. In 1971 and 1973 she was promoted to *Privatdozent* and *Oberassistentin*, respectively, and was granted a full professorship in 1977. Since her chief's retirement, in 1992, she has taken over the directorship of the *Institut* as well.

Professor von den Driesch has travelled widely through Europe, the Near- and North-East and South-Africa, conducting field work and studying newly disclosed archeological remains of animal origin dating from the end of the Palaeolithicum. This research, coedited in part with Prof. Boessneck and associates, generated an impressive number of scientific papers dealing with osteoarcheologic findings on both domesticated and wild animals.

During a rather long period of time Dr. von den Driesch worked

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in Spain and Portugal, where she collaborated with members of the Munich Division of Palaeoanatomy. The detailed analysis of the osteoarcheologic finds from some thirty different sites culminated in 1970 into a PhD thesis : *Osteoarchäologische Untersuchungen aus der Iberischen Halbinsel*. The project, which was sponsored by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, was not restricted to the study of mammals and included the assessment of a great variety of fish species as well. This research led in turn to the creation of an impressive reference collection of fish skeletons (ca. 2,000 items belonging to 680 different species disclosed i.a. in Italy, Spain, Egypt, South-Africa, Sudan and the Arabian Emirates) which is housed at the Munich Institute.

Prof. von den Driesch is currently involved in an interdisciplinary research program conducted by the Department of Physicogeography of the *Freie Universität Berlin* concerning the palaeoclimactologic fauna development in the central and eastern parts of the Sahara during the quartaimary period.

She is also responsible for the assessment of animal bone materials from Turkish excavation sites, i.a. at Pergamon, Milete, and Didyma. Finally, she takes an active part in the study of animal mummies from the animal gallery of Tuna el Gebel, Egypt, an interdisciplinary joint venture conducted with the Institute of Egyptology of the University of Munich. This vast archeologic research work on animal palaeoanatomy has provided her with the solid foundation necessary for the study of the history of veterinary science.

History of veterinary medicine is a novel discipline which formerly was part and parcel of the history of medicine and pharmacy, and few Faculties of Veterinary Medicine possess an institute of their own devoted to the study of the historical background of their discipline, as is the case at Munich University. During the last decades, however, several national and international societies were founded to promote this type of research. Thus the World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine, which bundles a very active group of interested veterinarians working under the presidency of Prof. Lochman, founded in 1976 *Historia Medicinae Veterinariae*, a scientific journal which

covers all aspects of the history of veterinarian medicine. Yearly the World Association co-organizes an international congress as well. The organization of the forthcoming convention, scheduled for May 1993 at Amersfoort, The Netherlands, is in the hands of the Dutch *Veterinair Historisch Genootschap*.

The great merit of Prof. von den Driesch with respect to the history of veterinary medicine is her rigorous scientific approach to the matter and her thorough knowledge of the ancient history. During the past decade her activities mainly focused on the historical aspects of her speciality. She contributed chapters to textbooks, e.g. on the history of embryology of domestic animals (in : Russe und Sindwatz) and on the cultural history of the domestic cat (in : vol. I of Christoph's *Katzenklinik*). Furthermore, she issued a vast number of papers on a wide variety of topics related to the history of veterinary medicine. Her manifold endeavours culminated in her *opus magnum* : *Geschichte der Tiermedizin - 5000 Jahre Tierheilkunde*, which appeared in 1989. A masterpiece not only by the text but also by the exceptional quality of the iconography and the originality of the source materials.

Since her book deals i.a. with the history of veterinary medicine in Central Asia, investigations were conducted in collaboration with the *Institut für Sinologie* of the University of Munich. Currently Prof. van den Driesch is involved in another research program of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* on *Siedlungsprozesse und Staatenbildung in tibetischen Himalaya*, directed by Prof. Schuh of the *Zentralasiatisches Seminar der Universität Bonn*. In this context she currently assesses various aspects of domestication and veterinary medicine through the analysis of ancient texts from Tibet, kept in Nepalese cloisters and libraries.

Beside these hectic research activities, Prof. von den Driesch remains responsible for the teaching of osteoarcheology, the history of veterinary medicine, and the history of domestic animals. She was visiting professor at Pretoria, Cape Town and Madrid, at the Departments of Anatomy of the *Ecole nationale vétérinaire de Toulouse*, France, and at the Harvard University, Boston, Mass..