

OBITUARY

SARIE MAGDALENA PEROLD (1928–2011)

Sarie Perold (née Lombard) (Figure 1) was born in Johannesburg, South Africa on 19 May 1928 and died in a frail care centre near Pretoria on Friday 11 November 2011, aged 83.

Dr or Mevrouw [Mrs.] Perold, as I used to call her, for she hated being called by her first name by strangers and anyone she perceived as her junior, matriculated from the Kensington Hoërskool in 1945 with four distinctions. She studied at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and received a B.Sc. degree in 1949, majoring in Anatomy and Histology. She well remembered the large first year classes at Wits as a result of the return of ex-servicemen from World War II. From 1950 to mid 1967, she worked as a laboratory technician in Histology and Chemical Pathology at the South African Institute for Medical Research, then for Irving & Robertson, a firm of private pathologists, and finally as a research assistant in the Department of Chemical Pathology at the Wits Medical School.

In 1953 she married the writer and film director Jan Perold, known for Afrikaans feature films such as *Die ruiter in die nag* (1963). Their only child, Jan, was born in 1967 and a year later they moved from Linden in Johannesburg to Val-de-Grace in Pretoria. Re-entering the work force in 1976, Dr Perold held several temporary teaching posts at private and public schools in Pretoria. During this time she also completed second year



FIGURE 1.—Sarie Magdalena Perold (1928–2011). Photograph: Elizma Fouché.



FIGURE 2.—Sarie Perold at work in the PRE bryophyte herbarium shortly after she started there in 1980. Photograph: Adela Romanowski.

courses in Zoology and Botany at the University of Pretoria. Her lecturers included the legendary Mr Oosthuizen of Zoology and Prof. Braam van Wyk, who later served as study leader for both her master's and doctoral degrees (Perold 1990, 1991). Little did she know that she herself would one day present a course on Bryology to 2nd year Botany students at the University of Pretoria; from 1992 to 1997.

In November 1979, Dr Perold joined the Botanical Research Institute (later the National Botanical Institute and now the South African National Biodiversity Institute) as a PRECIS database encoder. This job was very convenient, as she lived close to the botanical gardens and could drive her son to his many extra-mural activities in the afternoons. She also loved driving through the gardens on her way to work in the mornings. However, the encoding did not agree with her and she requested a transfer to the downtown head office of the Department



FIGURE 3.—From left, Jacques van Rooy, Robert (Bob) Magill and Sarie Perold in the PRE bryophyte herbarium, Oct. 1994. Photograph: Adela Romanowski.

Table 1. Liverwort taxa published by Sarie M. Perold (as listed in Tropicos, botanical information system at the Missouri Botanical Garden: www.tropicos.org)

Family	Name	Author	Reference	Date
Aytoniaceae	<i>Cryptomitrium oreades</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 24: 149. f. 1–2	1994
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia angulifolia</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 28: 159. f. 1–3	1998
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia capensis</i> var. <i>spiralis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 1. f. 1–3	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia cederbergensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 28: 1. f. 1–3	1998
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia elsieae</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 25. f. 1–3	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia gemmifera</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 27: 19. f. 1–3	1997
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia glenii</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 27: 20. f. 5–7	1997
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia hyalorhiza</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 83. f. 1–3	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia marindae</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 86. f. 5–7	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia monticola</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 87. f. 8–10	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia nyikaensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 31: 48	2001
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia renateae</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 77. f. 1–3	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia rwandaensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 28: 45. f. 1–7	1998
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia spinosa</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 29: 29. f. 5–8	1999
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia straussiana</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 27: 24. f. 8–10	1997
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia swaziensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 28: 162. f. 5–7	1998
Fossombroniaceae	<i>Fossombronia zuurbergensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 31: 25	2001
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia</i> subgen. <i>Chartaceae</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 29	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia</i> sect. <i>Micantes</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 187	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia</i> sect. <i>Pannosae</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 28	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia alatospora</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 15: 534. f. 4–6	1985
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia alatospora</i> var. <i>hantamensis</i>	Perold	<i>Hist. Phys. Cuba, Bot., Pl. Cell.</i>	?
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia alboporosa</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 19: 12. f. 5–6	1989
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia albomata</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 18: 160. f. 6–8	1988
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia ampullacea</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 168. f. 1–3	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia argenteolimbata</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 18: 155. f. 1–3	1988
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia atlantica</i>	Sérgio & Perold	<i>J. Bryol.</i> 17: 127. f. 1–3	1992
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia bicolorata</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 187. f. 5–7	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia biokoensis</i>	Perold	<i>Nova Hedwigia</i> 64: 244. f. 1–13	1997
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia duthieae</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 15: 531. f. 1–3	1985
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia elongata</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 167. f. 1–3	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia erubescens</i>	Perold	<i>J. Bryol.</i> 16: 371. f. 4–6	1991
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia furfuracea</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 176. f. 1–3	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia hantamensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 19: 157. f. 2–4: A–F: a	1989
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia hirsuta</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 187. f. 1–3	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia mammifera</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 176. f. 8–10	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia mamrensis</i>	Perold	<i>Cryptog. Bryol.</i> 26: 68	2005
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia microciliata</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 173. f. 5–7	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia montana</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 19: 9. f. 1–3	1989
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia namaquensis</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 180. f. 8–10	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia parvoareolata</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 15: 117. f. 1–3	1984
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia pulveracea</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 185. f. 1–3	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia radiata</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 34: 23	2004
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia rosea</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 181. f. 1–4	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia sarcosa</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 23. f. 1–4	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia schelpei</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 16: 29. f. 1–3	1986
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia sibayenii</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 31: 151	2001
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia simii</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 36. f. 5–7	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia somaliensis</i>	Perold	<i>J. Bryol.</i> 16: 367. f. 1–3	1991
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia stricta</i>	(Gottsche, Lindenb. & Nees) Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 197	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia tomentosa</i>	O.H. Volk & Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 25. f. 1–2, 3–6	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia trachyglossum</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 172. f. 8–10	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia vitrea</i>	Perold	<i>Bothalia</i> 20: 178. f. 5–7	1990
Ricciaceae	<i>Riccia vitrenosa</i>	Perold	<i>Index Bryol.</i> (ed. 2)	?

of Agriculture. Fortunately, the personnel officer, Mrs. Gwen Hussem, realised that it would be a loss for the institute and organised a post for her in the herbarium, as

part-time technical assistant to Dr Robert (Bob) Magill (Figure 3). He was on contract from the Missouri Botanical Garden to revise the mosses for the *Flora of south-*



FIGURE 4.—Collecting bryophytes in Lesotho as part of the first overseas British Bryological Society taxonomic workshop: National University of Lesotho (NUL), Roma, Apr. 1997. From left, Mr T. Mafa, Prof. Jeff Duckett, Dr A. Motee, Dr Sarie Perold and Mr Howard Matcham. Photograph: Marinda Koekemoer.

ern Africa (FSA) project. Her duties included microscope slide preparation, physical and scientific curation, identifications, and later taxonomic research (Figure 2). She was also in charge of the institute's Scanning Electron Microscope unit for many years.

How she landed this job in the first place came to light years later in a note addressed to Dr Donald Killick, Deputy Director of the institute, dated 28 April 1989. She wrote 'I would like to take this opportunity of sincerely thanking you for interviewing and appointing me ten years ago, when Mrs. Bruyns contacted you on my behalf. I have been very happy in my work at BRI.' On the 2nd of May Dr Killick replied 'I can't remember interviewing you, but if I did, it was one of the best appointments made.'

Dr Perold had many interesting stories to tell about her employers but always concluded that SANBI was the best place she ever worked for. Her great sense of humour kept us going through difficult times. In the words of a retired ex-curator of the National Herbarium: 'herbarium is dogsbody'. Her main regret was that she was always in only a 'temporary' post.

So she embarked upon a career in bryology at the relatively late age of 51, but nevertheless became one of the leading experts on the taxonomy and nomenclature of African thallose liverworts, in particular the genus *Riccia* (Van Rooy 2012). Dr Perold published more than 100 botanical papers, at nearly five papers per year, the vast majority of which appeared in SANBI's house journal *Bothalia* (see list below). Her longest series in *Bothalia* is *Studies in the genus Riccia (Marchantiales) from southern Africa* with 27 papers. However, she also published in several overseas journals, often by invitation (Van Rooy 2012). Her work on the thallose liverworts (Order Marchantiales) culminated in the first fascicle of the liverwort volume in the FSA series (Perold 1999). Dr Perold is the author or co-author of 53 new liverwort

names (36 in the family Ricciaceae) and one new combination (Table 1). She collected more than 5 000 numbers in South Africa, Lesotho (Van Rooy 2012) (Figure 4), Swaziland, Malawi, Réunion and Zimbabwe.

In 1993, when she reached the age of 65, Dr Perold had to retire from SANBI, but was determined to continue with her research. She was annually re-appointed on a temporary, part-time basis for another decade. Thereafter she maintained an active presence in her office and finally retired from scientific work in June 2009.

Dr Perold was a member of the International Association of Bryologists (IAB) for many years. She served on the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT) permanent Nomenclature Committee for Bryophytes from 2000 to 2005. In 1992, she was awarded the R.A. Dyer Prize for her contribution to taxonomic research at SANBI. The following year she received the Junior Captain Scott Medal, awarded by the South African Academy for Science and Arts for the best M.Sc. dissertation at a South African University. In 2011, the year of her death, she received the South African Association of Botany Silver Medal for her significant contributions to the advancement of botany in South Africa. In his endorsement of her nomination, Prof. Braam van Wyk concluded that '*Dr Perold is undoubtedly the most eminent hepaticologist southern Africa has hitherto produced. Her contributions to the taxonomy of the liverworts of Africa in general and southern Africa in particular have been immense and in many instances pioneering. All her scientific contributions are of the highest standard and of lasting significance.*'

Life wasn't all about liverworts to Dr Perold. She delighted in the presence of bush babies, small nocturnal primates (*Galego moholi*), that were living in the trees around her house. She regularly put out fruit for them, especially bananas. She also kept a pet squirrel monkey (*Saimiri* sp.) called Kesie, that she showered with love.

Kesie was let loose in the trees around her house in the afternoons, to the dismay of her neighbours. After the monkey had died, she adopted a stray kitten. She particularly loved a little Scrophulariaceous plant, *Cymbalaria muralis* subsp. *muralis* (ivy-leaved toadflax). She gave a plant to a friend to look after, to ensure she did not lose it.

Dr Perold's funeral service was held in the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk, Skuilkrans, just down the road from the institute, on 18 November 2011. It was attended by many relatives, friends and former colleagues, including Mrs. Girlie Filter and me, both technical assistants in the bryophyte herbarium at the time of her appointment. She is survived by her son Jan, a research psychologist.

In his letter of condolence, Prof. Rod Seppelt of Tasmania, a long-time correspondent, wrote 'She will be a great loss and her contributions to our knowledge of the South African hepatic flora have been exemplary.' The eminent bryologists and experts on the bryoflora of Africa, Prof. Ryzard Ochyra and his wife Prof. Halina Bednarek-Ochyra from Krakow, Poland, remarked that 'Her death is a great loss, not only for South African but also international bryology and her meticulous work on thallose hepatics will continue to serve as a model of unprecedented scrutiny and accuracy.'

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J. VAN ROOY

National Herbarium, South African National Biodiversity Institute, Private Bag X101, Pretoria 0001, South Africa. E-mail: j.vanrooy@sanbi.org.za.