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Preface

The articles appearing in this special issue of *Acta Psychologica* are based on presentations given at the symposium ‘Looking for Stages’. This symposium was organised on the occasion of Andries F. Sanders becoming professor emeritus and was held at 28th August 1998 at the *Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences* (KNAW) in Amsterdam. The title of the symposium reflects the two major themes of Sanders’ work: Looking for information in the functional visual field and the analysis of the processing stages in choice reaction time tasks (see Sanders, 1990, 1998 for overviews). These two aspects reappear in some form in all articles in this special issue.

Andries Sanders has played a major role in bringing Dutch experimental psychology to its current level. In The Netherlands, he was amongst the first psychologists practising experimental and applied psychology concurrently. Despite his training as a clinical psychologist, he started his career in the late 1950s as the first experimental psychologist at the Institute for Perception TNO in Soesterberg, the Netherlands. In these early days, one of his teachers was Donald Broadbent with whom he worked at the MRC-Applied Psychology Unit in Cambridge, England. He gradually learned to appreciate applied problems and to approach them from a theoretical perspective. The combination of experimental and applied psychology has always marked his work and is still one of his major themes witnessing his book *Elements of Human Performance* (Sanders, 1998). In this book, and elsewhere (e.g., Gopher & Sanders, 1984), he formulates his strong conviction that applied and experimental psychology are approaches to the same problem. In the Preface of this book he tells us how shocked he was when, in the mid-1970s, he heard basic research being characterised as ‘journal research’. As if basic and applied research would not be so closely related! His entire career, first at TNO in Soesterberg, and later at the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule in Aachen, Germany and the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, can be perceived as a highly successful attempt to use both approaches concurrently to a variety of applied and fundamental issues.

One reason to publish the proceedings of this symposium in *Acta Psychologica*, was that Andries Sanders himself has been managing-editor of *Acta Psychologica* for no less than 12 years (1976–1988). After that period, he continued using *Acta Psychologica* as the main outlet of his work. Another of Sanders’ achievements was the organisation of the first *Attention and Performance* conference in 1966 in Driebergen,

The Netherlands. In the preface of the symposium proceedings, published as a special issue of *Acta Psychologica*, Sanders describes how the idea for a symposium on Human Performance Theory had emerged in discussions with colleagues when he was spending his sabbatical leave in the US (Sanders, 1967). It is illustrative for the person Andries Sanders that, at age 33, he was the one who actually faced this challenge and invited some of the most respected colleagues of that time. He succeeded more than he could have hoped for: Not only did he persuade highly respected researchers such as Bertelson, Gottsdanker, Moray, Nickerson, Norman, Posner, Rabbitt, Kornblum, Michon, Sperling, Tulving, Welford, and Wilkinson to contribute to the conference, by founding the Attention and Performance society he also paved the way for one of the most respected conference series in performance theory of our days.

In organising the symposium, we wanted to invite both older colleagues and former students: People who worked in close collaboration with Sanders at least at one point in his career. We were impressed that virtually all of the potential keynote speakers were prepared to come over to Amsterdam. We would like to thank Danny Gopher, Herbert Heuer, Sander Los, Bert Mulder, Michael Posner, Wolfgang Prinz, Saul Sternberg, Jan Theeuwes, and Willem-Albert Wagenaar for participating in the symposium and making this a day Andries will probably not easily forget. A number of participants choose to submit a paper for this issue of *Acta Psychologica*. Of course, all papers underwent regular peer review to ascertain that the normal quality standards of *Acta Psychologica* were met. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the reviewers who, in a number of cases, had not been involved in the symposium and still helped to guarantee the quality of the articles in these proceedings. Organisation of the symposium was financially supported by the Graduate Institute for Experimental Psychology (EPOS), the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the TNO-Human Factors Research Institute, and North Holland, Elsevier Science.

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