

NEWS

THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF EINSTEIN'S VISIT TO BARCELONA

On the 17 and 19 November 1998 two events were celebrated to mark the 75th anniversary of Albert Einstein's visit to Barcelona. The acts were organised by the Catalan Society of Physics in conjunction with the Catalan Society of the History of Science and Technology (who said that any collaboration at the human level between both societies was impossible, on the contrary!).

As is well known Einstein gave a series of conferences in Barcelona between February and March 1923, as part of the Courses of Higher Education and Exchange organised by the Catalan Government, the *Mancomunitat*. Apart from the great honour of receiving one of the most important figures in the history of science, the impact this visit was to have was remarkable in many aspects (see the article describing Einstein's reception in the *Revista de Física*, second semester 1998).

The commemorative acts began on the 17 November in the Science Museum of the «La Caixa» Foundation. That day history took centre stage: Karl von Meyenn, currently working at the University of Munich, gave a paper entitled «Albert Einstein and modern historiography», in which he discussed the historical and commemorative studies that have the physicist as their central figure - virtually countless and still appearing! The complete works of Einstein, including his manuscripts and letters, are being published in their original language and in their English translation, thanks to sponsorship from several international foundations. At the same event Luis Navarro Veguillas, from the University of Barcelona, presented some reflections on «Aspects of creativity in Einstein». Einstein's thinking and his intellectual development were analysed in the paper as a means of illustrating the role of creativity in modern science.

The second act took place on Thursday 19 November in the Prat de la Riba Hall in the Institute for Catalan Studies. Here the papers fell into two categories. First, Thomas F. Glick, from the University of Boston, spoke about «Einstein's public person: between physics and cultural politics», based on Einstein's visit to Barcelona in 1923. After this, there were two papers discussing the theory of relativity today: the first speaker was Josep Llosa, from the University of Barcelona, whose paper was entitled «Special relativity: accumulated evidence and its current state», followed by José Martín Senovilla, from the same university, who gave a paper

entitled «General relativity and the birth of scientific cosmology». Both contributions stressed the continuing validity of Einstein's thinking, the support it receives from observations and, at the same time, the stimulating nature of his character, which generates new theories, and new visions of the physics of the world.

These brief descriptions perhaps give little indication of the interest shown in the two sessions. However, both events received the full backing of the public: the lecture theatre in the Science Museum was full; while the Prat de la Riba hall was overflowing. And this without those attending being aware that the organisers would be handing out a leaflet entitled: *Einstein in Catalan. The three famous articles from 1905 published to mark the 75th anniversary of Einstein's visit to Barcelona*. Ed. *Revista de Física*, Barcelona 1998. The leaflet was distributed to the members of the Catalan Society of Physics and the Catalan Society of the History of Science and Technology and contains the first Catalan versions of three seminal articles: the first explains the photoelectric effect and outlines a particle theory of light; the second explains Brownian motion and is proof of the atomicity of matter; and the third is the article that lays down the foundations of the special theory of relativity, a true classic in contemporary physics.

Commemorations might be criticised for their somewhat opportunist, perhaps even, arbitrary manipulation of the past and what is being commemorated. Yet we should not forget that above all commemorations represent the present in that we use such moments in history to express our collective spirit. We need to consider carefully why it is that Albert Einstein fascinates us so. But this is another story...

Antoni Roca Rosell

NEW MEMBERS OF THE *INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS CATALANS*

Section of Science and Technology

Damià Barceló i Cullerés

Born at Menàrguens (Noguera, Catalonia) in 1954. He received a doctorate in Analytical Chemistry from the University of Barcelona in 1984 for a thesis on the use of

porous polymers in gas chromatography and their application to the determination of volatile compounds. He was assistant lecturer at the Department of Analytical Chemistry of the University of Barcelona from 1982 to 1986, and furthered his studies at the Department of Analytical Chemistry of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1985 and 1986. Subsequently he joined the Higher Council of Scientific Research (*Consell Superior d'Investigacions Científiques* – CSIC), where he has been a researcher-lecturer at their Barcelona Research and Development Centre (CID – CSIC) since 1992. He was an associate professor in the Department of Hydrology in the Pharmacy Faculty of the University of Oporto (European Union Praxis Programme) from 1995 to 1997.

He is editor of the prestigious collection of analytical chemistry *Wilson and Wilson Comprehensive Analytical Chemistry* (Amsterdam). He is also associate editor of the journals *Trends in Analytical Chemistry* (Amsterdam) and *Analysis* (Paris), and associate editor for Europe of *Current Protocols in Field Analytical Chemistry* (New York). He is a member of the editorial board of several scientific journals, such as *Química Analítica* (Barcelona), *International Journal of Environmental Analytical Chemistry* (London), *Journal Mass Spectrometry* (United Kingdom) and *Journal of Chromatography Series A* (Amsterdam).

He has published over two hundred scientific experimental research articles, one hundred and seventy-four of which were published in non-Spanish magazines, and twenty-five book chapters. He has also edited and co-authored various books. Recent bibliometric studies consider him the most internationally cited Catalan chemist of recent years.

His research work is in the field of environmental chemistry. Its general aim is to solve environmental problems through the development of systems of measurement.

The basic research of the group he directs at the Department of Analytical Chemistry of the CID-CSIC at Barcelona focuses on developing new analytical methodologies to determine organic compounds in the aquatic element, with special emphasis on the influence of the different water matrices, the transformation of contaminating organic compounds, and the formation of the corresponding metabolites, which are often unknown. Along these lines the group has developed methods to pre-treat samples based on new absorbents, systems of pre-concentration, of post-column and of derivatisation for liquid chromatography, and mass spectrometry detection with different interfaces such as thermospraying and chemical ionisation at atmospheric pressure. In recent years immunoassay or ELISA techniques have been introduced.

The group of Damià Barceló is one of the pioneers in environmental applications, the use of chromatographic techniques and the determination of new analytes in water. The group he directs is one of the most advanced in Europe in the analysis and transformation of pesticides and their degradation products in water, as well as in the general determination of polar organic compounds in industrial effluents.

He has been a member of the Governing Council of the

Chemistry Section of the Catalan Society of Physical, Chemical and Mathematical Sciences, and was Publishing Director from 1982 to 1988 of this society affiliated to the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC). He has been a member of the Council of the Catalan Society for Physics and editorial secretary of the Science Division of the IEC. For many years he was joint organiser of the Scientific Workshops of the Affiliated Societies of the IEC (Physics, Chemistry) at the Catalan Summer University at Prada de Conflent.

Section of Biological Sciences

Lluís Garcia i Sevilla

Born in Valencia in 1944, he graduated in Medicine in 1969. He is a recognised authority in the field of behavioural science, within which he has worked on questions that range from Psychophysiology and Psychopharmacology to the study of Sociopathologies, Ethotherapy, the experimental model of the personality and conduct modification techniques.

In 1971, as assistant teacher in practicals, he began his uninterrupted teaching and research activity in the Department of Psychology and Psychiatry of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where later he was entrusted with the more biological subjects: psychophysiology and medical psychology. He then set up the Laboratory on Conduct, which was for a long time the only basic research laboratory in its field in Spain.

From the 1975-76 academic year he was in charge of teaching medical psychology in the Department of Psychiatry of Professor Obiols. Back at the Autonomous University in 1980, he became Head of Department and then Head of the Division of Medical Psychology. At present he is full Professor of Medical Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry and Forensic Medicine.

In the different posts of responsibility he has held, he has given an example of accurate critical rigour and absolute independence, qualities which have led him to genuine new areas of scientific endeavour, both in research and teaching.

He has managed to surround himself with a restless and inquiring team, in which a large number of disciples have been trained. He has directed fifteen degree dissertations and twelve doctoral theses, and has published over one hundred papers in Catalan, European and American journals.

The prestige of Garcia i Sevilla has led to his nominations as adviser to the Recruitment Department of the *Ertzaintza* (Basque police) and consultant to the Selection Panel of the Citizens' Safety Directorate of the *Generalitat* of Catalonia.

He took active part in the resolutions in the area of research of the Congress of Catalan Culture (1977), presented research proposals to the III Catalan University Congress (1978), and presented four contributions to the II International Congress on the Catalan Language (1986). He was active – with presentation of papers – in both the twelfth

Congress of Catalan-speaking Physicians and Biologists (Benicàssim and Castelló, 1984) and its fifteenth Congress (Lleida, 1996).

In 1976 he won the Martí i Julià Prize of the IEC for his *Anàlisi de la psicoanàlisi* (Analysis of Psychoanalysis); and in 1978 he received the Marià Aguiló Prize, also from the IEC, for the study undertaken jointly with Adriana Garau, *Vocabulari de la psicologia del condicionament i de l'aprenentatge* (Vocabulary of psychology, conditioning and learning). The Spanish Society of Psychology awarded him the Borràs Prize in 1982, and the Catalan Society of Behaviour Research and Therapy awarded him the Pavlov Prize for his scientific achievement in 1993. In addition, *Obra Cultural Balear* awarded him the Gabriel Alomar Prize in 1987 for his book *Mallorca, ara*.

In 1994 he set up, under the name *Sus, Balears!*, a debating forum that brings together the most significant committed intellectuals. Its purpose is to awake and stimulate in the Islands the feeling of belonging to a specific nation.

Francesc Asensi i Botet

Born in Benifalló (Ribera Alta, Valencia) in 1939. He studied school certificate at Xàtiva and graduated in Medicine from Valencia in 1962. He obtained the specialist qualification of the Professional School of Paediatrics and Puericulture, also in Valencia, in 1964.

He studied on a fellowship at the Bavarian University of Würzburg, where from 1964 to 1966 he furthered his studies and researched his doctoral thesis, with which he obtained in 1967 the grade of excellent *cum laude*. Later he returned to Germany and worked at the Kinderzentrum in Munich.

At present he is Head of the section of Infectious and Contagious Diseases at the La Fe Children's Hospital in Valencia and is Associate Professor of Paediatrics at the University Faculty in Valencia, where he has directed two degree dissertations and two doctoral theses. As visiting Professor, he has given classes at the Ukrainian Society of Paediatric Research, the Latin American Society for the study of paediatric infectious diseases (at Acapulco) and the Mexican Association for the study of paediatric infectious diseases.

He is a member of various international societies in his field and has published over eighty research papers in European and American journals.

In addition to his dedication to paediatrics, Asensi studied language and literature under the direction of the poet and grammarian Carles Salvador and obtained the qualification of teacher of the Valencian language. He also studied primary school teaching and obtained the extraordinary end-of-course prize. He holds the qualification of Primary Teacher. He has taught at the Summer School of the *País Valencià* (Land of Valencia) for primary school teachers.

He has been a consistent contributor to the scientific and technical journal *Saó*, which awarded him the Josep Espasa Prize for his study on *Aspectes ètics de les actituds personals davant la qüestió nacional* (Ethical aspects of personal

attitudes during the national question). For many years he was editorial secretary of the Humanities journal *Folia Humanística*.

He has worked and published on social and cultural themes in medicine and science, such as sectorialisation and respect for the country, the scientist's social commitment, or the relationship between medicine and justice. He has also delved into questions of the history of medicine and scientific thought, such as the sociological aspects of the work of Lluís Vives or Islamic Science in the Land of Valencia in the XI and XII centuries.

He has assisted in the compilation of the *Diccionari enciclopèdic de medicina* (Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Medicine) by contributions on Valencian, Northern and Southern dialect variations. In addition, his has been the voice that has kept alive, with biographical notes, the memory of various cultural figures such as Josep Rodrigo, the founder of Valencia's Museum of Palaeontology, the writer Martí Domínguez or key physicians such as Cèsar Sainz or Jordi Gol. Since 1976, when the Congress of Catalan-speaking Physicians and Biologists was resumed, he has taken part in every Congress and was the Vice-president of the twelfth.

He is a founder member of *Acció Cultural del País Valencià* (Cultural Action of the Land of Valencia) and member of the Board of trustees of the Ausiàs March Foundation and Alsina i Bofill Foundation. He has been a member of the editorial board of the collection *Monografies Mèdiques* (Medical Monographs) and contributed actively to setting up the Health Structure Area of the Congress of Catalan Culture.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3rd European Congress of Mathematics

Barcelona, July 10-14, 2000
Shaping the 21st Century

The 3ecm is organised by the Societat Catalana de Matemàtiques, under the auspices of the European Mathematical Society. The European Mathematical Society (EMS) was founded in 1990. The Societat Catalana de Matemàtiques (SCM) became a corporate member on July 4, 1992. In December 1994, the SCM made a bid for the organisation of the Third European Congress of Mathematics (3ecm) in the year 2000 in Barcelona. Other bids were submitted by Brighton, Copenhagen, and Torino. The EMS Council selected Barcelona in its meeting of July 21, 1996, in Budapest, by a large majority of votes.

The Executive Committee of the 3ecm was nominated by the Board of the SCM. It consists of six members; the President is Sebastià Xambó Descamps. The Organising