

# LACAMES

## Latin American Conference on the Application of Mössbauer Spectroscopy

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We can not speak about Mössbauer spectroscopy in Latin America without speaking about Jacques Danon who passed away in 1989. He has initiate to work already in 1960 in this field at Brazilian Center for Research in Physics (CBPF), in Rio de Janeiro. He always insisted that we should not compete with the countries of north hemisphere but exercise our creativity in scientific research, looking for topics related with our region or having a new approach in frontier topics, addressing topics that can be studied in the frame of the scientific and technologic difficulties (not facilities). He always said: *Lo que es importante, no son las técnicas y computadores, son las ideas. Solamente la creatividad puede generar un verdadero progreso tanto en la ciencia como en cualquier campo de la actividad humana.*

In the early days of Mössbauer spectroscopy in Latin America there was more interaction; this was not the case when I started to work in Mössbauer spectroscopy. Danon always mentioned collaboration with Augusto Moreno y Moreno, in Mexico, Carlos Abeledo and Albert Fech. He published the first lectures in Spanish on the Mössbauer effect given at the Escuela Latino Americana de Física that was held in Mexico, in 1968.

In 1985, while participating in a commission to discuss the future of CLAF (Latin American Center for Physics) I realized how bad the scientific collaboration among Latin American groups doing research was; they tend to give priority to the interaction with groups in north hemisphere. The collaboration with our neighbors in Latin America would not occur spontaneously, it was necessary to be worked out because, more than the proximity, they have common problems.

With these ideas in mind I went to a Brazilian meeting in Mössbauer spectroscopy, which was the last from a series going through all the groups (see H. Rechenberg report). Our idea was to change a bit the scope including all Brazilian groups working in Hyperfine Interaction. There I have made another proposition: open the meeting to all the Mössbauer groups in Latin America. This proposition was accepted and I suggested that the Chairperson should be Jacques Danon, knowing that I should do the heavy work.

In November 1988 we organized in Rio, with the help of Rosa Scorzelli the first LACAME; the name of our meeting was inspired in the ICAME. At those days we were able to bring together more than 129 participants! I believe that most of the people working in this area came to Rio.

It was difficult to contact all the people, in this case the contribution of Danon was essential: he knew everybody. But there was no e-mail, no telephone and the best communication was by telegram and fax. For the first time I learned about Raiza from Havana, Jaen in Panama or Aburto in Mexico.

The situation in Brazil in 1989 was very favorable for our purpose; the Ministry of Science and Technology had been just created. I was able to get support from several Brazilian institutions and foundations as CBPF, CNPq, CNEN, FINEP, CAPES and CLAF. The total budget was about US\$ 50 000 and the invitation included air ticket, hotel and meals.

Circa of 10 non Latin American scientist specialists in different fields were invited and contributed to the success of the conference. I still remember how the eyes of some students were shining when they could listen to these known specialists in Mössbauer spectroscopy. All the effort was worthwhile!

After that we had the nice meeting in Cuba with the conversation with Fidel Castro and many non Latin American participants. Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Mexico (in 2004), it has been a long way, with a lot of efforts (the chair persons know it well), but the result is excellent.

The number of participants has decreased along these 15 years. May be there is now less people in the field or less funds available, this we still need to find out. In Brazil the strong group of Porto Alegre, where I was introduced to Mössbauer

spectroscopy, has only a minor activity and sometimes does not participate even in the Brazilian meetings. To compensate now we have the group of Vitoria and Ouro Preto, which are very active and have organized the last Brazilian meetings. New groups have been created in Peru (Victor Peña Rodrigues) and Colombia (Perez Alcazar) and they are very active as we could see in the last conferences. From the successive meetings we can follow the development of some students like Restrepo from Colombia. He gave a talk in Caracas as a senior scientist!

Despite this conference became smaller they are very dynamic with a lot of discussion and interesting questions. I hope we can keep this atmosphere for Mexico.

This meeting have been very important for the participants, researchers and students that do not have the opportunity to participate in the ICAMEs. Traditionally some few non Latin American specialists are invited speakers together with local researchers from areas where Mössbauer spectroscopy can be applied. For example, in Venezuela we had some talk about Petroleum industry. We try to avoid inviting the same non Latina American specialists in two successive meetings in order to cover different areas.

The LACAME has contributed for the collaboration among LA groups and for spreading this spectroscopy in LA. All the applications are being studied, including minerals, meteorites, soils, superconducting and magnetic materials, milling, catalyses, corrosion, chemistry, thin films, heavy fermions, etc. However we still hope to be able to improve the shearing of the facilities among the groups and establish bilateral official exchange programs.

On a regular basis the LACAME conferences are organized in Latin America, each two years and we succeeded in organizing and reinforcing the collaboration among the Mössbauer community in Latin America. Except for the conference in Chile the Proceedings have been published by Hyperfine Interaction.