



sent to Prof. Leninha Valério do Nascimento - Editor-in-Chief ANAIS BRASILEIROS

Madam:

*A Essência da Ciência / The essence of Science*, reads your recent interesting editorial by your Associate Editor Omar Lupi. I fully support what he has written, I do have however a few remarks which, I hope, you may consider for publication.

All of us are aware that the English language is the lingua franca of today, it is at the same time the language with the richest vocabulary and the Compound Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary is the most voluminous and most elaborate ever edited. At the same time we all acknowledge the proud history of Britain and her dependencies as much as the achievements of her scientists over the centuries. But we must be aware that other languages have their own proud tradition and scientific academies abound in history since the renaissance. The Platonic Academy of Lorenzo il magnifico in 1474, the Accademia della Crusca 1582, the Accademia dei Ricovrati (Galileiana) of 1599, the Accademia dei Lincei in 1603, and many others may only be known to the historian, however they constitute the flower of Italian science in the centuries when Europe was born.

Two other national academies founded prior to the most respectable Royal Society in Britain, should not be left unmentioned in any commentary of sorts. The Académie Française, and the Academia caesareo-regia naturae curiosorum or "Leopoldina".

The former was founded formally in January 1635 under Louis XIII following a move by Cardinal Richelieu. 1672 Louis XIV took it under royal patronage. To this day, membership in this august body of the 40 "immortals" carries the highest prestige in the francophone world, and beyond. We should recall for instance, what attention she

got, when Marguerite Yourcenar was admitted as the first female member and also how the formal dresses and ceremonial swords are put on display, at the meetings, or after the death of one such celebrity.

The latter, the German academy, was originally founded in Schweinfurth in 1651 and taken under imperial patronage in 1687 by Emperor Leopold I, therefore the name "Leopoldina". This scientific body was one of the few institutions which survived the post World War II split of Germany. Named after an emperor by the name of Leopold, it convened for the first time at the tomb of its patron saint, Saint Leopold, margrave of Austria (1075?-1136), in September of 2002 at the Klosterneuburg Monastery near Vienna, where the author had the honor to participate.

I want to give the reader an idea of celebrities which were nominally assembled in even a "smaller" academy, as is the Galileiana of Padova where Galileo Galilei was a founding member in 1599 and where I am socio straniero. Browsing only through the first two letters of the alphabet in the list of members, 3 Hapsburgs, 2 Bonapartes, Jean Baptiste d'Alembert, Caspar Bartholin, Bartolommeo Bizio (melanin), Agostino Bassi (first fungus), Achille Breda (Hebra's pupil and president of the said body in 1912/14), Giulio Bizzozero and Jean-Louis Brocq, greeted me.

These few words do not give credit to the many similar endeavours in still other countries.<sup>1</sup> On account of the historical weight the above two national academies, the French and the German, contemporaries of the Royal Society, carry over the centuries, my recalling of facts may be permitted. The *Essência da Ciência* should just have a little broader basis of data.

#### REFERÊNCIA / REFERENCE

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