

EDITORIAL

On the One Hundredth Birthday of Dr. Juan Manuel Tato, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pioneer in Advancing Otorhinolaryngology into Modern Neurootology

As early as 1969, I met Dr. Juan Manuel Tato, of Buenos Aires, Argentina, during his visit to the University of Würzburg, Germany where, in 1864, Dr. von Troeltsch had created the specialty of otology for the first time in history. Dr. Tato appeared as a true Spanish gentleman: polite, charming, well educated, and experienced in the ultimate stage of development of ear surgery. At that time, he not only showed interest in the field but already was turning toward modern neurootology.

He was born in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1902. There, he graduated from the medical school and finally became an internationally recognized ear surgeon, living in close contact with the leading group of innovators in the field of ear, nose, and throat science: Lempert, Bordley, Shambough, House, Schuknecht, Rubin, Pulec, and the like in the United States and Michele Portmann (senior and junior), Greiner, and Pialoux in France. Dr. Tato was affiliated with such luminaries as Zange, Zoellner, and Wullstein in Germany; Candela, Gavilan, and Bartual in Spain; Bustamante in Mexico; Surjan, Ribari, and their contemporaries in Hungary; Morimoto, Fukuda, and Sakata in Japan; and De Sa and the critic Kirtane in India. Dr. Tato associated with such figures as Freeman in Australia; Hamberger and Henriksson in Sweden; Groen and Jongkees in Holland; Luescher, Pfaltz, and Fisch in Switzerland; Mangabeira-Albernaz and Malavasi in Brazil; Arslan in Italy; Kishinishvili in Russia; Rius and Castillo in Uruguay; and Tello and Delucchi in Chile. The names and countries of an additional large number of important contemporary otorhinolaryngology specialists could fill yet another long list.

Dr. Tato became very famous within the field of otorhinolaryngology since introducing modern ear surgery into South America as early as 1933. At that time, he performed the first fenestration of the inner ear in a case of otosclerosis in Argentina. Besides keeping up with international standards in the development of ear

surgery until only recently, more than 40 years ago he also introduced phono-audiology as a supporting subspecialty of otorhinolaryngology. After 1972, he extended this field by incorporating neurootology. As the term *neurootology* indicates, this new field is an offspring of otorhinolaryngology, whereas *otoneurology* describes the otological aspect of neurology. Early on, in Buenos Aires, Dr. Tato became chairman of the otorhinolaryngology clinic at one of the medical schools of the Hospital Italiano.

Besides all of these activities, he ran a very successful private clinic at Azcuenaga 235. There, he received clients and patients not only from Argentina but from all the Americas and from further abroad, among whom were very many celebrities.

For the Spanish-speaking world, he founded the important journal, *Revista ORL*, in which authors from many countries presented—and still are presenting—the latest developments in the field of otorhinolaryngology, including those of audiology and neurootology.

In 1972, at Buenos Aires, Dr. Tato and I published a textbook, *Equilibriometria Practica*, about the modern trends of objective and quantitative neurootometry. In that city, we performed an international training course for neurootology, including electronystagmography, topodiagnosics by means of the butterfly calorigram, craniocorpography, and other test procedures.

From that time, we enjoyed a close personal relationship. I learned much about, and benefited very much from, Dr. Tato's extraordinary abilities as an unusually successful teacher, convincing organizer of medical educational courses, understanding friend, and fatherly advisor. Special gifts of Professor Tato were his great abilities, first, to attract ordinary people, scholars, and even those with very opposing opinions and, second, to persuade them to discuss matters seriously and with respect. Therefore, out of sympathy and respect, his alumni and friends call him *maestro*.

With his international background and deep knowl-

edge about the matter of neurootology and the needs of neurootometry, he motivated us in 1974 to bring together those interested in forming an international society for neurootology and arranging for discussion in four languages: German, Spanish, English, and French (Gesellschaft für Neurootologie und Aequilibrimetrie Ev; Sociedad de Neurootologia y Equilibrimetria Reg.; Neurootological and Equilibrimetric Society Reg.; and Société de Neurootologie et D'Équilibrimetrie Reg.).

The aims of the association remain as follows:

- to promote clinical neurootology in practice and in the field of clinical research;
- to train doctors and paramedical personnel interested in this field in making neurootological diagnoses, paying special attention to tests of functional equilibrium;
- to standardize clinical methods of research and research equipment;
- to create functional anthropometric standards;
- to develop selection principles for employee recruitment in fields in which functional strain particularly affects the neurootological functioning of the senses;
- to allow participation, with the help of neurootological and medical advice, in the development of new transport technology and other systems associated with disorientation strain; and
- to develop therapeutic modalities in the field of neurootology especially related to diseases with such manifestations as vertigo, giddiness, dizziness, hearing loss, and tinnitus.

All persons eligible for membership are doctors or technicians especially interested in neurootology or the measurement of equilibrium, independent of nationality. Currently, our membership numbers more than 650 persons living in some 48 nations.

In 1996, at the twenty-third Neurootological and Equilibrimetric Society meeting, a special award was created. It carried the name of Dr. Tato and was to be awarded for scientific works making special contribution to developing neurootological diagnoses and therapies.

During the 1970s, the international world of ear, nose, and throat (ENT) medicine elected Dr. Tato as president of the International Federation of Otolaryngological Organizations (IFOS). He was given the task of hosting and organizing the unforgettable 1977 International ENT Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

His wife, Mrs. Elisa Tato (now 98 years old); his son, Dr. J.M. Tato, junior ("Tatin," now 70 years old and a specialist in otolaryngology); his daughter, Elisa Sturla (now 62 years old and a specialist in phonology); and 12 grandchildren have supported him during his entire life. As his son Tatin recently wrote on the occasion of his father's one hundredth birthday: "We always kept a relation of professional and familiar respect and admiration." With a large group of international colleagues and neurootologists, we completely agree with this sentiment and add our very sincere congratulations on the occasion of Dr. Tato's one hundredth birthday: Thank you for stimulating, leading, and advising us so well, Maestro Tato!

Prof. Dr. Claus-Frenz Claussen