

Editorial

Remembering Tibor Braun (1932-2022)

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Professor Dr. Tibor Braun, the founder and honorary Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry (JRNC) as well as of Scientometrics, founder of Fullerene Science and Technology (currently known as Fullerenes, Nanotubes and Carbon Nanostructures) passed away in September 2022. He was a professor emeritus of the Institute of Chemistry of Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest, Hungary and an honorary member of the Romanian Academy of Sciences.

We commemorated the founding editor in the first as well as the memorial session of the third International Conference on Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry (RANC-2023) in Budapest on 8 May 2023. The talks were presented by Dr. Zsolt Révay the present Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Dr. Amares Chatt editor of Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry (JRNC), and Prof. Dr. Syed M. Qaim Editor-in-Chief of Radiochimica Acta (RCA), and these authors contributed to this Editorial in the same sequence.

Tibor Braun studied at the Victor Babes University, Cluj, Romania, where he graduated as a research chemist. His first job immediately bonded him with nuclear science, as he became a researcher at the nuclear reactor of the Institute of Atomic Physics, Bucharest. In 1963, the young radiochemist moved to Hungary, where he continued his work at the Laboratory of Nuclear Chemistry of the Loránd Eötvös University.

Soon after his arrival, he started working on his ambitious dream: to establish an international journal on radioanalytical chemistry. As we recalled in the festive Editorial (based on an interview with him) [1] dedicated to the 50th anniversary of JRNC, he managed miraculously to convince the director of the Akadémiai Kiadó (the Publishing House and Printer of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at that time) to get permissions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party and, in spite of the strong political resistance to launch the unprecedented international project in 1968, a politically extremely complicated year on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Following his initiative, Elsevier, was also got involved: while Akadémiai Kiadó was responsible for the production, Elsevier arranged its dissemination all over the world. After about two years of preparations, the first issue was published in

September 1968 with a long delay. Journal of Radioanalytical Chemistry became a truly international journal, containing articles from both East and West.

One of great ideas of the young editor to promote the journal was the so-called Laboratory of the Issue section, in which important western radiochemical labs were introduced, e.g., the Nuclear Methods Group at the National Bureau of Standards (now known as the National Institute of Standards and Technology) in the U.S.A. The director of the Bureau's Analytical Chemistry Division, Dr. W. Wayne Meinke, received in 1968 the first Hevesy Medal Award which became one of the most prestigious awards in our field. The Medal was awarded to many eastern and western nuclear scientists, and it attracted more and more attention to the journal.

We are convinced that the journal contributed a lot to the progress of the whole field, uniting east and west, later also involving colleagues from developing countries; so it also facilitated the peaceful communication all over the globe.

Tibor Braun left an important oeuvre behind, besides founding three still existing international journals, he also authored more than 200 scientific articles in nuclear chemistry, fullerene chemistry, and sometimes on the combination of this two e.g. in collaboration with one of the authors of this editorial [2]. He remained exemplarily active until his last days. In his later years, he wrote several popular books on scientific topics, as he liked to call these writings scientific popularization of scientific knowledge. His reticent gatekeeper attitude in editing as well as his achievements serve as an example for all of us.

Amares Chatt met the Hungarian Editor-in-Chief for the first time in 1977 at the 3rd International Conference on Nuclear Methods in Environmental and Energy Research, University of Missouri - Columbia, MO, USA held during 1977 October 10–13 on the occasion of presenting the Hevesy Medal to Richard E. Wainerdi of the Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Tibor Braun thought of honouring the best nuclear analytical chemist through this annual award. He was very proud of the famous Hungarian Nobel Laureate (1943) George de Hevesy (1885–1966) who received the Nobel Prize for his pioneering work on the use of isotopes as tracers in the study of chemical processes, so, he named it Hevesy Medal Award (HMA) and established it in 1968 through JRNC.

The HMA was given 19 times during 1968–1986 to distinguished scientists from all over the world mainly involved in neutron activation analysis, that time the most important method in nuclear analytical chemistry. Amares Chatt became the President of the International Committee on Activation Analysis (ICAA) in 1999 and worked with Tibor Braun to reactivate HMA in 2000. Today, HMA is the premier international award of excellence in radioanalytical and nuclear chemistry including radiopharmaceuticals. Each year, HMA is awarded to an individual in recognition of excellence through outstanding and sustained career achievements in the fields of pure as well as applied nuclear and radiochemistry. A typical call for nomination for HMA is attached [3]. Through the years, Amares Chatt also worked with his Hungarian colleague to promote nuclear analytical chemistry as the North American Regional Manager of JRNC and in-charge of conf proceedings in addition to HMA.

Tibor attended nuclear analytical chemistry conferences around the world whenever he could. He and his wife Clara attended the 7th International Conference on Nuclear Analytical Methods in the Life Sciences (NAMLS-7) held during 2002 June 16-21 in Antalya, Turkey. Amares Chatt also attended the same meeting and managed to capture a few photos of them (Figs 1, 2).

Akadémiai Kiadó (the publisher of JRNC) organized the first International Conference on Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry (RANC-2016) in Budapest during 2016 April 10–16. Tibor couldn't attend it, so, we went to his office at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to present him with a medal of Lifetime Achievement (Figs. 3, 4, 5).

Amares Chatt came to also know the personal side of him. He was kind-hearted and a good listener. He gave particular attention to scientists from developing world. He promoted their work actively. He helped them improve their scientific writing skill whenever requested. He was always willing to meet new people, to listen to new ideas, to get involved in new projects, etc.

Tibor and his wife Clara Braun were both very hospitable persons. Amares Chatt remembers the very first time he came to see him while he was attending an IAEA conference in Vienna in 2000 and came to Budapest to discuss reactivation of HMA. He had the most delicious Hungarian Goulash at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences special VIP dining room listening to a live piano player and looking at the beautiful scenery outside and the buildings of the castle district across the Danube.

Syed Qaim had known Tibor Braun for more than 50 years. Their relations were warm, because of two common features in their attitudes: to advance the field of radiochemistry through international publishing, and to help the scientists in developing countries to participate in publishing.

Syed Qaim first met the Hungarian colleague during the Radiochemical Conference in Bratislava in 1966 which he attended as a Research Fellow in Birmingham, England. At that meeting, Tibor Braun aired the idea of a new journal on radioanalytical chemistry. Syed Qaim returned to Pakistan but continued to correspond with him. The Hungarian scientist propagated his idea with vigour, convinced his peers and soon got the journal established, with several internationally recognised radioanalytical chemists as members of the Advisory Board.

In 1968, Syed Qaim emigrated to Germany and started meeting with his Hungarian colleague at various places, especially in Mariánské Lázně and Budapest. Very good relations were established between their Institute of Nuclear Chemistry of the Forschungszentrum Jülich and the Editor-in-Chief of JRNC. A few researchers from Jülich, e.g. Gerhard Stöcklin, Kurt Rössler and Syed Qaim published several lead articles in JRNC. They arranged a few special issues and served as referees. Later, Johannes Ermert and Syed Qaim collaborated as advisors to JRNC. It was very pleasant and enlightening to cooperate with Tibor Braun because of his friendly, unassuming and accommodating character. After the Hevesy Medal was awarded to Syed Qaim in 2008, the relations became even stronger. Today, the Director of the Institute, Bernd Neumaier, is an Associate Editor of JRNC, and the contacts are still quite close.

Syed Qaim would like to express his great admiration and appreciation to the founding editor for fighting against all odds to get the journal established at an international level. He had rather limited institutional support, faced lack of funds and had to accept frequent change of publisher, but he remained undaunted in the pursuit of his mission. When Hungary joined the EU, the journal was well-established and it was adopted by the renowned publisher Springer. Syed Qaim salutes his Hungarian colleague for his great achievements, and at the same time, he felicitates Zsolt Révay, the new Editor-in-Chief of the journal, as well as Associate Editors Amares Chatt and Bernd Neumaier, for carrying further the torch of light lit by Tibor Braun. Under the new leadership the journal has been making continuous progress. Furthermore, with the support of the Akadémiai Kiadó, they have established this series of conferences which are attracting great attention. It is a great tribute to the memory and legacy of the founding editor.

Syed Qaim would like to convey condolences to the bereaved family and friends of Tibor Braun, on his own behalf, on behalf of radiochemist colleagues at the Forschungszentrum Jülich as well as on behalf of *Radiochimica Acta* of which he has been the Editor-in-Chief for more than 25 years. The two journals, i.e. *JRNC* and *RCA*, have had some competition, but it was always healthy, and the two Editors-in-Chief maintained cordial relations.

Finally, in appreciation of Tibor Braun's constant magnanimity and willingness to help scientists from developing countries, Syed Qaim had the honour and privilege to convey condolences from three international groups with whom he has had some associations. They are Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority, and Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology.

In the end we pray for Tibor Braun and his associates: may his soul rest in eternal peace; may his family have the strength to bear the loss with fortitude; and may his work and deeds remain in our memories and benefit the mankind.

References

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- [2] Révay Zs, Belgya T, Molnár GL, Rausch H, Braun T (2006) *Chem Phys Lett* 423:450-453.
- [3] Chatt A (2023) *J Radioanal Nucl Chem* 331:4413-4416.



Fig. 1. Prof. Braun at NAMLS-7 conference.



Fig. 2. Prof. Tibor Braun and his wife Clara at NAMLS-7 conference.

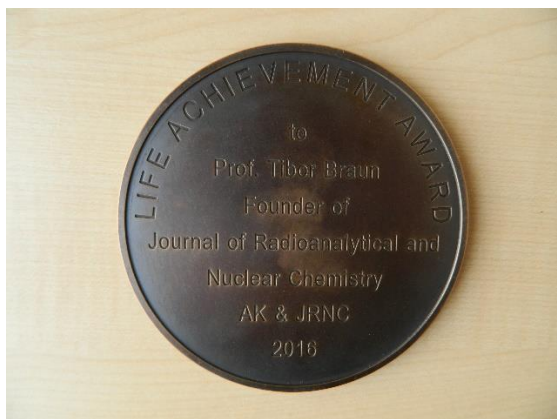


Fig. 3. Lifetime Achievement Award Medal to Prof. Tibor Braun.



Fig. 4. The other side of the Medal.



Fig. 5. Left to right: Dr. Zsolt Révay (Editor-in-Chief, JRNC), Dr. Balázs Réffy (Managing Director of Akadémiai Kiadó, publisher of JRNC), Prof. Tibor Braun (Founder and Honorary Editor-in-Chief, JRNC), and Prof. Amares Chatt (Editor, JRNC)