Ninety years have elapsed since the Old Quantum Theory has emerged, and eighty three over the foundations of Modern Quantum Mechanics. Born in 1901, Ruy Gustavo Couceiro da Costa soon became aware of the importance of Quantum Mechanics in Science, particularly in Chemistry. Such a vision has flourished ever since and its presence in the scientific realm is nowadays unquestionable: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, Engineering and even Philosophy, all such areas of knowledge reflect the importance of judgement in accordance with the quantum laws. This book is a result of a Symposium to honor the memory of Professor Couceiro da Costa for his contribution to the development of Quantum Mechanics in Chemistry and Physics in Portugal.

A tribute to the memory of Professor Couceiro da Costa

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3.1 Couceiro da Costa: The scientist

Ruy Gustavo Couceiro da Costa graduated in Physico-Chemical Sciences with high honours at the University of Coimbra in 1922. During his studies, he proved he had a bright mind with a special aptitude to science. In 1920, he was invited to join the chemical staff of the University of Coimbra as an assistant lecturer. Soon he displayed a propensity to interpret chemistry in both physical and mathematical grounds and an ability to delve deeply into scientific concepts. He was awarded his PhD in 1927 and in 1936 he was appointed professor of physical chemistry, a subject taught in the last year of the chemical graduate courses.

His PhD thesis was prepared in the Chemical Physics Department of the Hydrological Institute of the College of France and in the Department of Chemistry of the University of Coimbra. It deals with the analysis of gases emanated from Portuguese mineral water springs. Experimentation is the dominant feature of the work. Delicate glass blowing manipulations were involved to make the apparatus and devices used in the sampling, separation, identification and quantification of the components of the gaseous mixtures.

In those days, besides a thesis, the candidate for the doctorate degree had to propose three topics of chemistry and three of physics to be defended in

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