

PREFACE

Fascinating Auger effect but also fascinating **Pierre Auger**. For most of the people involved in Practical Surface Analysis by Auger spectroscopy, the man was quite unknown and the technical details of his decisive discovery were not very clear, even for French scientists. The opportunity to discover the man was given to a few of us in Paris, March 1989, upon the occasion of his 90th birthday. We find a man who, when he was 24 years old, established the key aspects of the “effet photoélectrique composé” using very rustic but very clever equipment (see the illustration).

After such a discovery most people would spend their scientific life exploiting the scientific and personal benefit of such a finding. Most people that is except P. Auger who was, in 1928, on board a liner going from Le Havre to Rio de Janeiro to study Cosmic rays at the Equator. Following the exile of Ch. de Gaulle to London, he emigrated to the United States in 1940 and then went on to create an Anglo Canadian laboratory in Montreal (Canada).

After World War II, he participated successively and successfully in the creation of the CEA (French Atomic Energy Commissariat), the Science Department of UNESCO (United Nations of Education, Science and Culture Organization) and CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research).

In the sixties he also founded the CNES (National Center for Space Studies) and the ESRO (European Space Research Organization). In parallel he found time to write poetry (in English !) and to sculpt small objects at lost wax.

On the 24th December 1993, Pierre Auger passed away after a fantastic life. This issue of Microscopy, Microanalysis, Microstructure is not dedicated to all the aspects of his scientific activity. It concentrates on the recent applications of Auger spectroscopy to the chemical characterization of surfaces. This is an exploding and living field which, at the end of this century, is full of promising consequences and which has its origins in the pioneering work of Pierre Auger, carried out alone and during such a short period of his life.

The guest editors

Jacques Cazaux

Jean-Paul Langeron