

In Memoriam

Academician Panayot R. Bontchev

(31.12.1933–11.04.2015)



Panayot R. Bontchev was born on 31.12.1933 in Burgas, Bulgaria. He graduated with excellent scores at the University of Sofia in 1956 and defended his scientific degrees obtained in 1965 (PhD) and 1975 (DSc). For over 46 years P. R. Bontchev has been affiliated to the Department of Analytical Chemistry of the “St. Kliment Ohridski” University of Sofia: Assistant Professor (1956), Associate Professor (1969) and Full Professor of Analytical Chemistry (1979–2002). Professor Bontchev was elected a Corresponding Member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) (1995–2003) and Academician of BAS (since 2003); he is also Fellow of the Bulgarian National Academy of Medicine (since 1995). Prof. Bontchev has established and lectured several University courses for graduate students: Coordination in Analytical Chemistry (1965–1980), Analytical Chemistry (1970–2004), Biocoordination (Bioinorganic) Chemistry (1978–2002), Structure and Reactivity of Chemical Compounds (1985). His textbook “*Introduction to Analytical Chemistry*” (three editions in 1972, 1979, 1985) and a Russian translation in 1978, has been widely consulted for over four decades. Prof. Bontchev also lectured in two other Bulgarian Universities: in “Episkop Konstantin Preslavski” University of Shumen (1972–1987) and South-West University in Blagoevgrad (1988–2001). After his retirement from the “St. Kliment Ohridski” University of Sofia (2002) he was a Visiting Professor at the Institute of General and Inorganic Chemistry of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1978–2002) and the “Academician Angel Balevski” Institute of Metal Science of BAS (2003).

Professor Bontchev is widely known for his research in the field of analytical, coordination and bio-coordination chemistry: catalytic methods of analytical chemistry (1959–1980), complexation and catalytic activity in homogenous catalysis (1962–1980), coordination chemistry of Cr(V) (1970–1986), analytical determination of antibiotics (1975–1985), coordination chemistry of Pt and Pd (1980–), metal complexes of bioligands in biology and medicine (1980–). He has published over 200 scientific articles in Bulgarian, Russian and international journals, three monographs and has co-authored four specialized books. His monograph “*Complexation and Catalytic Activity*” (1972) has also been translated in Russian (1975). He is a holder of 11 Authors’ Certificates and patents. Professor Bontchev has been lecturing in 21 universities abroad, being a Honorary Ostwald Professor at the University of Leipzig, Germany (1981). He has participated in 90 scientific conferences with 24 plenary and 17 keynote lectures, over 50 oral presentations and posters. His publications have been widely cited in over 2000 relevant texts in the world’s scientific literature, among them in over 15 prestigious textbooks in analytical chemistry such as Charlot (France), Laitinen and Harris (USA), Sandell and Onishi (USA), Christian and O’Reilly (USA), Wilson and Wilson (USA), Zolotov (Russia), Bussev (Russia), Kreingold & Bozhevov (Russia), Vassilev (Russia), “*Analyticum*” (Germany) etc.

A scientific school on catalytic analysis has been established in Bulgaria in the beginning of the career of P.R. Bontchev. It has been recognized as one of the world’s leading schools in this field, resulting in six PhD and 2 DSc theses and two professorships. These studies have been acknowledged at a later stage in the monographs on catalymetry by Yatsimirskii (Moscow), M. Peres-Bendito and Valcarcel (Spain), D. Peres-Bendito and Silva (UK), H. Mueller, M. Otto and G. Werner (Germany), etc.

A well-known Bulgarian school in coordination and bio-coordination chemistry has been established by Prof. Bontchev, resulting in nine PhD and one DSc theses, and numerous papers in international journals. These results have been cited in the textbooks on inorganic and coordination chemistry: Cotton and Wilkinson (USA), Peterson

(USA), M. Tobi (UK), Horvath and Stickenson (USA), Kryukov, Kutchmii and Dilung (Kiev); in “*Comprehensive Coordination Chemistry*” (Wilkinson, Ed.), “*Encyclopedia of Inorganic Chemistry*” (Bruce-King, Ed.), “*Structure and Chemical Bonds*” (Germany), “*Toxicity of Inorganic Compounds*” (USA) etc. On the basis of Prof. Bontchev’s research have been initiated studies by scientists in Germany, UK, Japan, USSR, Poland, Greece, India, France, etc.

The administrative and organizational activity of Prof. Bontchev is well known: he has been Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry (1976–1979), Vice-Rector of the University of Sofia (1989–1991 and 1995–1999), Head of the Department of Analytical Chemistry (1991–1999); Chairman of the Specialized Council for Conferment of PhD and DSc in Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry in Bulgaria (1991–1995, 2001–2004); President of the Chemistry Commission of the Bulgarian Supreme Certification Committee (1995–2000); Member and Vice-President of the Chemistry Commission of the National Research Foundation (1990–1995); Member of the National UNESCO Commission (1990–) and National IUPAC Committee (1990);

Member of the International Organizing Committee for the International Conferences of Coordination Chemistry (ICCC) (1970–2001); Director of the American-European Alliance “Universities for Democracy” (1990–2001). Prof. Bontchev has been a Member of the Editorial Board of “*Talanta*” (1979–1992) and “*Chimika Chronika – Newseries*” (1992). He has been decorated with numerous national and international medals and awards.

Complete bibliography and bibliographic data for Prof. P. R. Bontchev have been published elsewhere (*Ann. Univ. de Sofia, Fac. Chimie*, **97** (2), 17–30 (2005) <<http://www.chem.uni-sofia.bg/annual/>>; In: “*Almanac of Analytical Chemistry in Bulgaria*”, G. Naydenov (Ed.), Europress, Plovdiv, 2006, pp. 67–71, ISBN 978-954-9357-10-3).

Academician Panayot R. Bontchev passed away at the age of 81 on April 11th, 2015 in Sofia. He will be remembered as a dearest teacher of many hundreds of students and post graduates and a prominent scientist in the field of chemistry.

D. L. Tsalev