

‘Thank you’ words at Málaga, 15th March 2018

A few weeks ago I got an unexpected email from the President of the Grupo Español de Fractura - GEF, Antonio Martín Meizoso, informing me that the GEF decided to award me their Honor Medal, with formal award during the gala dinner of the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the group, organized in Málaga by Belén Moreno and her colleagues.

I met Antonio for the first time in Lisbon, in the early eighties when I - then a very recent PhD from Cranfield - was one of the co-organizers of the 5th European Conference in Fracture (ECF5). There I also met Javier Gil Sevillano and other Spanish colleagues; later I met in Madrid Manuel Elices Calafat, and since then many other Spanish colleagues.

So far several joint meetings of the Spanish and the Portuguese groups on fracture already took place: Braga (1987), Mérida (1993), Luso (1996), and Porto in 2010 of which I was the chairperson together with Gustavo Guinea from Madrid. For the 2010 Porto meeting I met so many Spanish colleagues that I almost learned how to speak Spanish ...

The Portuguese group is enthusiastic, active, but underfunded and not very robustly organized weakening his possible impact – and of course I assume responsibilities for past shortcomings under my watch; let us hope that situation improves in the future! And when I say underfunded, I refer to heavy investments in the experimental part, without which our scientific field does not even exist: materials testing, residual stress measurement, TEM microscopy, ... all very expensive artifacts to buy and maintain.

There are fruitful relationships among many people in the Spanish and Portuguese groups; it comes to mind the interactions of Pedro Camanho (Porto) and the composites group in Girona, of Alfonso Cantelli and Abílio de Jesus (at Oviedo and UTAD-Vila Real respectively, later Porto where Abílio is now), or the frequent visits to Portugal of Jesús Toribio and his Salamanca collaborators. Reciprocally, the frequent participation of Manuel de Freitas and his Lisbon colleagues in activities of the Spanish group should be mentioned, as well as participations in Spanish events of José Martins Ferreira and the Coimbra group, which is so well represented here in Málaga tonight.

I could go on and on; but it needs to be said that further to joint publications as special issues of journals (an example of which recently involved me and Carlos Navarro Pintado of Seville, together with an Italian colleague), joint visits, and occasional ERASMUS exchanges (I had recently a student from Univ. Politécnica de Cartagena in Porto for her master thesis, for ex.), little has taken place as joint participation in international projects – particularly those of the EU - and that unfortunate situation must be improved.

The lasting impact of our scientific field needs an inclusive vision; our field started with metallic alloys, later expanded to polymers and composites, later to bio related materials, and fields of application seem to be unlimited, from ‘traditional’ aeronautical, shipbuilding, civil structures, to bio applications or MEMS and PCBs, etc.

With the permanent dedication and curiosity of our community, our field will thrive, and even more so if cooperation is enhanced, within our national communities and bilaterally through joint Iberian activities. I accept this award as a token of this aspiration!

Málaga, 15th March 2018, *Paulo M. S. T. de Castro*