



Dr. DAVID VÁZQUEZ  
1930~1986

### *Obituary*

DAVID VÁZQUEZ died in Madrid in February of this year, after a brief illness. He had been a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Antibiotics since 1971 and was truly a man of antibiotics. Much of his career was devoted to studies of mode of action, resistance mechanisms, and the use of inhibitors in biochemistry. He made his mark with a classic paper, published in 1964, in which he demonstrated the specificity of the action of chloramphenicol on 70S compared to 80S ribosomes. In addition to showing that antibiotics have structurally defined target sites, this work led the way to many potential applications of antibiotics in basic research. Much of the work that DAVID carried out subsequently was an extension of this effort; he published over 250 papers, most of which dealt with some aspect of the study or use of antibiotics. Practically all of the biochemical studies of inhibitors of eucaryotic protein synthesis came from the initiative of DAVID VÁZQUEZ; through this work he made numerous important contributions to our knowledge of the mechanism of protein synthesis and the structure and function of ribosomes.

In addition to his valuable research contributions, DAVID made strong efforts to promote Spanish and international science. He attracted an extremely talented group of young scientists to his laboratory in Madrid and provided the environment and encouragement to develop independent and productive careers; these former members of the VÁZQUEZ group are now all well-established.

DAVID VÁZQUEZ was a marvellous ambassador for his country and he would always offer his services to help organise conferences and meetings in Spain; he made every effort to encourage collaboration between workers in different countries and his influence on the scientific aspects of Spain's entry into the EEC will be sorely missed. At the time of his death he was President of the Spanish Society of Biochemistry and he was a member of EMBO, ICRO, and several other international organisations. DAVID was at the same time a fierce patriot and a man of the world, imbued with a passion for life and for science; he had an influence on everyone who knew him, in university, industry, and government.

From a personal point of view, DAVID was a loyal and knowledgeable friend. At one point in his career he worked as an official wine taster and he took every opportunity to give me practical lessons on the marvellous products of Spanish vineyards. I remember him best as an uncomplicated person who was always honest

and direct and who loved to fight, especially against unnecessary bureaucracy. It is unfortunate that he lost his biggest fight, for his life, after such an extremely difficult illness.

DAVID VÁZQUEZ will be sadly missed by all of us, as a Spaniard, as a world-class scientist, and as a good and loyal friend. He leaves a devoted wife and family who can but share with us the legacy of the good things that DAVID VÁZQUEZ did and for which he will always be remembered.

(J. DAVIES)