

In Erice the Tower of Thought "Piersanti Mattarella" as EPS Historic Site

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The unveiling of the EPS Historic Site plaque. From left to right: H. Wenninger, M.J. Duff, L. Cifarelli, J. Szyszko, A. Zichichi, S. Bertolucci. (Credits: EMFCSC)

On August 21st the "*Piersanti Mattarella Tower of Thought*" was inaugurated as the 30th EPS Historic Site by Prof. Jan Szyszko, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Poland. The ceremony took place at the base of the tower, in the hallway of the Rabi Institute of the Ettore Majorana Foundation and Centre for Scientific Culture (EMFCSC) in Erice, in the presence of Antonino Zichichi, President of the EMFCSC, Luisa Cifarelli, President of the Italian Physical Society and Chair of the EPS Historic Sites Committee, Michael Duff, Emeritus Professor at Imperial College London, Sergio Bertolucci, former Director of Research and Scientific Computing at CERN

(in 1979, a student of the EMFCSC Subnuclear Physics School), Horst Wenninger, past Research-Technical Director at CERN. The ceremony was also attended by a hundred scientists from forty Nations, participating in the 49th Session of the *International Seminars on Planetary Emergencies*.

In the study housed at the top of this tower, John Bell was thinking about what is now referred to as the Bell's inequality, and several other scientists were using it as a quiet place where to work. Rudolf Mössbauer, Kenneth Wilson, Richard Feynman, Georges Charpak, Samuel Ting, Wolfgang Paul, Norman Ransey, Frank Wilczek, Gerardus 't Hooft, Alex Müller and Masatoshi Koshiya, for instance, are said to have been inspired in the right direction for the Nobel Prize while working in the tower.

In 1982, the *Erice Statement* for a science without secrets and without frontiers was devised and written in this very place by Paul Dirac, Piotr Kapitza and Antonino Zichichi. In 1985, at the Geneva meeting of the two superpowers (USA and URSS) leaders, Reagan and Gorbachev declared that peace's enemy number one in the world were the secret labs, as stated in the Erice Statement, now signed by 100,000 scientists from all over the world.

The name given to the tower was a tribute to Piersanti Mattarella, a strong supporter of the Erice Centre, assassinated by the Mafia in January 1980 while he held the position of President of the Regional Government of Sicily. Piersanti was the son of Bernardo Mattarella, Minister of the Italian Government when in 1963 the Subnuclear Physics School, the first in the world, was established in Erice. Piersanti was also the brother of Sergio Mattarella, the current President of the Italian Republic.

The study of the Piersanti Mattarella Tower of Thought is the highest part of the building which was once the monastery of San Rocco (1100 A.D.) and the highest point of sight in Erice. From 1963 onwards, thanks to the far-looking initiative of Prof. Antonino Zichichi, four ancient monasteries have been restored to become the infrastructure of the EMFCSC: they are now four institutes named after Patrick Blackett, Isidor Rabi, Victor Weisskopf and Eugene Wigner.

Homepage image: The "Tower of Thought Piersanti Mattarella" as seen from the courtyard of the Isidor Isaac Rabi Institute of the EMFCSC in Erice. (Courtesy of L. Cifarelli)