RUYSSEN, Romain

Born: August 22, 1901 (Adinkerke, actually merged with De Panne)
Died: May 28, 1979 (Ghent)

Biography

Romain Ruyssen is the son of the pharmacist Honoré Ruyssen. Due to WWI , his secondary studies are scattered over the Koninklijk Atheneum of Oostende, the Lycée Français of London, the Lycée Hoche in Versailles and the Koninklijk Atheneum of Bruges. In 1924 he graduates as pharmacist at the University of Ghent and in 1928 he obtains a doctorate of chemistry at the Free University of Brussels (ULB). He settles as a pharmacist in Ostend from 1928 till 1930.
His academic career starts in 1930 by becoming a volunteer assistant to Professor René Goubau at the University of Ghent, joins the Laboratory of Organic Chemistry of Professor Jan Gillis, where he is in charge of the laboratory exercises of pharmacists and chemical engineers.
During this period he was highly concerned with the dutchyfying of the University of Ghent. In 1932 he joins for two months the Gemeentelijke Universiteit of Amsterdam at the laboratory of professor A.Aten.
In 1934 he is appointed lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ghent where he is in charge of the phamacognosis, galenic and practical pharmacy and legislation and deontology.
He becomes a full professor in 1938. In 1965 he is appointed to the chair of medical chemistry. He is head of the laboratories of pharmaceutical, organic and inorganic chemistry and of the control of drugs. He becomes a member of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences in 1970.
Romain Ruyssen also holds a number of academic functions: secretary tot the Faculty of Medicine (1946-1947), dean of the same faculty (1947-1949), chairman of the centre of biochemistry (1953-1971) and secretary of the Academic Council (1965-1966).
In 1955 he is member of the Board of Directors of the University Lovanium.
On August 23, 1971 he retires as emeritus professor.

He is since December 1940 member of the Royal Academy for Sciences and Arts, rising to Chairman (1951) and honorary member (1976).
He is member of the Permanent Committee for the history of Sciences, the Van Oye Committee, and the MacLeod Fund.
He is associated member of the Académie de Pharmacie (Paris), honorary member of the Societate Stintelon Medicale of Rumenia and member of the Société Philomatique of Paris.
He is founder and becomes president of the Belgian Society of Clinical Chemistry...
He organizes and becomes chairman of an extensive number of conferences concerning the biochemistry of lipids, the role of enzymes in clinical chemistry as well as becoming the founder and chairman of the international meetings of pharmaceutical sciences the Netherlands (Leiden, 1957), Brussels (1958) and Zürich (1959), ending up being honorary chairman of the International Commission on Pharmaceutical Enzymes.
He is also vice-president and president of the Koninklijke Vlaamse Chemische Vereniging.

Scientific Achievements

Together with his team, Ruyssen published some 300 scientific articles.
His doctoral thesis has as subject the ionization of the gases as a result of the thermal dissociation of ozone.
With professor Goubau he studies the absorption spectrum of ozone with UV light.
With professor Gillis he performs the quantitative analysis of ozone by spectrophotometry and iodometry.

With professor Aten he concentrates on the electro titrations of silverhalogenides.
His research also includes the effect of mitogenetic radiation at the laboratory of bacteriology and biochemistry of foodstuffs at the University of Utrecht.
In 1938 he studies the coacervation of phosphatids at the laboratory of colloids of professor Kruyt, which leads to a four-month stay at the laboratory of professor Gartner in Minneapolis.

Ruyssen's main scientific merit is the introduction of physiochemistry and biochemistry into the world of pharmacy. It is important to know and understand the biochemistry of healthy and sick organisms. From this angle his research concerns a.o. the physiochemistry and biochemistry of proteins and enzymes, their colloidal properties and surface tension.
He is the first researcher in Belgium to use radioisotopes in the pharmacy. This concerns the properties of saponines, the mechanism of hemolysis (using red blood cells with their cholesterol marked with C-isotopes, the study of pharmaceutical emulsions, biosynthesis of fatty acids, triglycerides, phospholipids, and glycerol. An interesting subject is how saponines and tensides cause foam and how to curb this.
Even after he retires Ruyssen publishes in 1978 *Pharmaceutical Enzymes, Properties and Essays Methods*.
For his research he receives an honorary doctorate at the University of Strasbourg. In 1949 he holds the Franqui-chair at the ULB. In 1968 he is awarded the Host-Madsen-medal.