

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera: Importance of his trajectory in Mexican pharmacology

Diana Laura López-Vega* and Xóchitl Martínez-Barbosa

Department of History and Philosophy of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), México City, Mexico

Abstract

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera (1936-1982) arrived in Mexico from Spain in 1936. Since then, his links with compatriots abroad and their acquired preparation in Europe allows to contribute to Mexican Pharmacology. He participated in teaching and research; he formalized, presided and helped to structure the Department of Pharmacology of the Faculty of Medicine from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and promoted the training of specialized associations. He led the Section of Pharmacology in the National Academy of Medicine. Understanding the value of his contribution helps to visualize the growth and maturation of national Pharmacology. (Gac Med Mex. 2016;152:502-10)

Corresponding author: Diana Laura López-Vega, alleka_diana@hotmail.com

KEY WORDS: Pharmacology. History of Medicine. National Academy of Medicine.

Introduction

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera arrived to Mexico in 1936, shortly before to the start of the Spanish Civil War, which would trigger the wave of political refugees who emigrated to Latin American and European Countries. These events were to unleash a series of sociological and cultural phenomena that would redirect the scientific environment in different countries¹.

To refer to the role played by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera in the field of Mexican medicine, it is necessary to visualize the national panorama where he started to participate. Mexico was going through a period of intense changes in all spheres that make up national life. His arrival coincided with a country on the way to consolidation and in search for stability and development; the bases of political thought that would regulate national actions and Mexico's international behavior in

the face great international events, such as the Spanish Civil War and the start of Second World War, were being established.

The openness attitude fostered by President Lázaro Cárdenas government enabled the entrance in Mexico of socialist ideals and Latin American and European renewal ideas, which met and melted with national currents of thought, encouraged by a progressive government, which resulted in intellectual ebullience.

We should highlight that Mexico was identified with an emerging Latin American identity, reflected in the creation of organisms to foster medical scientific exchange such as, for example, the Latin American Association of Physiological Sciences and the Latin American Society of Pharmacology, which will be addressed later.

These circumstances, added to political will, contributed to the construction of national contemporary modern medicine: fostering the development of specialties

Correspondence:

*Diana Laura López-Vega

E-mail: alleka_diana@hotmail.com

1. Kumate Rodríguez J. La gestación de la Medicina del Siglo XX en México. En: Viesca, Carlos (coordinador). Medicina Mexicana, dos siglos de historia. México: Facultad de Medicina, UNAM, ANM; 2011. pp. 257-9.

Date of reception: 13-04-2015

Date of acceptance: 06-07-2015

and the creation of institutions that would also serve as scientific research centers.

Through investigation of primary sources, it is possible to approach historical events from a unique perspective and to analyze the importance of Dr. Pérez Cirera academic trajectory in the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM – *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) and the National Academy of Medicine (ANM – *Academia Nacional de Medicina*) of Mexico, as well as to identify his contribution to pharmacology in Mexico and the importance his foreign links had on his professional work. This is why the present manuscript is essentially supported by documents donated by Dr. Pérez Cirera's family to the Historical Archive of the Faculty of Medicine (AHFM – *Archivo Histórico de la Facultad de Medicina*) of the UNAM, as well as by the academic file safeguarded in Mexico's ANM library heritage.

In Spain

Native to Granada, Spain, Ramón Pérez Cirera was born on February 24, 1906, as the son of engineer Faustino Pérez Cirera and Dolores Herrera Jiménez Rosales.

His middle-high education was at Cardenal Cisneros Institute in Madrid. Madrid Central University becomes the place where he studies high-school and concludes the physician and surgeon degree studies in 1929² (Fig. 1). Prior to the conclusion of his professional studies, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera had already demonstrated an enormous capacity and interest for research, especially in the areas of pharmacology and physiology. In 1925 he started working with Severo Ochoa³ (1905-1993) and José García-Valdecasas⁴, in a laboratory directed by the eminent physiologist Juan Negrín (1892-1956), a doctor who was committed to the socialist cause in Spain. This background allows understanding the relationships established by Spaniards living in the exile and the personality maturation process that would characterize him throughout his professional practice.

The documents bequeathed to the AHFM by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera and the biographic information on his activities prior to his arrival to our country reflect a man of diplomatic skills and nimble personality from

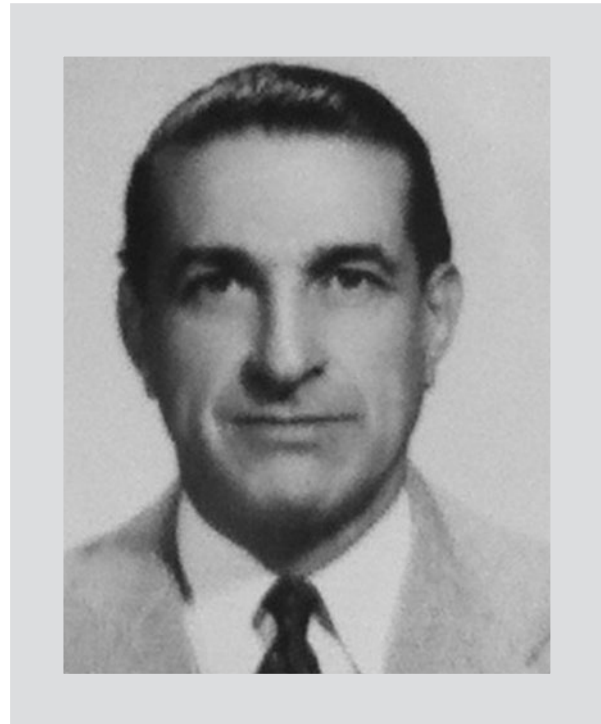


Figure 1. Picture of Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 131, f. 1.

the political point of view, which enabled for him to position and obtain benefits such as, for example, the opportunities he was granted to continue with his professional training and practice as a physician and to pursue his interests as an investigator, which somehow implied economic advantages for him.

In 1928, Dr. Ramón Pérez de Cirera was awarded with the Board for Education and Scientific Investigation Extension (JAE – *Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigación*) grant⁵, which enabled for him to stay for one year in New York and Paris. The modernization spirit and the purpose of human resources training of this association were preserved among expatriates and were applied in the different countries where they were reincorporated to academic work, which is reflected in Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera's work in Mexico. This new human resources training impulse was nurtured by the government of the Second Spanish Republic, where Juan Negrín was a prominent member of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE – *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*) until the Francoist coup in 1936.

2. Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera academician file, ANM de México.

3. Exiled in the USA, where he settled from 1956 on; he obtained the Medicine and Physiology Nobel Prize in 1959.

4. Spanish physician, Severo Ochoa's classmate in Juan Negrín's courses; he was exiled to Mexico in 1939.

5. JAE, founded in 1907, supported the best students with grants for training abroad and to be able to establish in spaces for them created at their return. The spirit of JAE was maintained among expatriates and spread with them to other countries.

At his return to Spain in 1929 and on July 23, four days before obtaining his doctor's degree, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera started officially his teaching practice at the same university that trained him –the Madrid Central University– with the charge of temporary assistant professor assigned to the courses imparted by Dr. Juan Negrín, an appointment he would maintain until 1936; at the same time he was appointed physiology associate professor.

In 1930, our illustrious character carried out physiology research works in collaboration with Dr. Dodds in London. One year later, the JAE supported him again to stay in Fribourg with Dr. Hoffman; later, in 1932, he was a visiting scholar in Leipzig with Prof. Gildemeister.

In 1935 he travelled to Berlin to carry out works on experimental pharmacology with Prof. Heubner, where he is started in the field of work he would embrace for the rest of his life. His relationship with Dr. Juan Negrín did not restrict to the teaching sphere: during the time the latter was Secretary of the Faculty of Medicine of Madrid, Dr. Pérez Cirera assisted him also in administrative tasks such as, for example, in 1932 he obtained the academic appointment of Vice-secretary of the Faculty of Medicine under direct orders of Juan Negrín.

When examinations for the chairs of different universities in the subjects of Pharmacology, General Therapeutics and Medical Matters were carried out, Ramón Pérez Cirera was unanimously granted the Valladolid chair in 1936; eight days after this appointment, he requested voluntary leave of absence to travel to Madrid, where he would bear witness to the events of July 18.

It should be mentioned that in spite of having been appointed as full professor, his availability to meet these compromises must have been limited, especially considering the successive travels Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera made on those days.

Noteworthy, the intense activity displayed by Dr. Pérez Cirera in Europe would favorably impact on his professional practice in Mexican soil. Through his correspondence, he maintained constant communication with some of the physicians he met during his academic training such as, for example, Dr. Dodds⁶ from London.

The voluminous epistolary communication with his colleagues from other latitudes served different purposes, such as addressing matters about scholarships, student exchange, research data exchange, and even more precise aspects such as study lists subjects and laboratory practices formulation, among others.

It can be claimed that Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, aware of the benefits of constant professional exchange, promoted the creation of academic support networks between different institutions. He took care of scholarship programs implementation for UNAM's Pharmacology Section members during the time it was under his direction, as well as in many academic institutions, especially in the University of Chile.

Beautiful, beloved Mexico

Officially, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera arrived to Mexico on October 18, 1936, entering as an immigrant and not as exiled, which was a wave that reached the country in 1939. He settled in our country definitively after marrying a Mexican woman.

The activities displayed by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera within the early years of his stay in Mexico include clinical practice at the *Sanatorio Español de México*, as well as activities in clinical biochemistry and in local pharmaceutical companies⁷, this way covering the axes a physician can develop during his/her professional career: clinic, research and teaching, an activity he would join soon after.

Academic activities

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera was an active member of the scientific community of his era; he worked in different institutions, including the UNAM. He joined the Faculty of Medicine by recommendation of doctors Ocaranza⁸ and Perrín⁹, standing out in his teaching activities as a promoter of human resources training both in Mexico and in foreign institutions, which made him deserve different recognitions.

The first university appointments he received were as General Physiology and Embryology professor,

6. AHFM, Fondo Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera (FRPC), vol. 6, exp. 102.

7. Ibidem.

8. Fernando Ocaranza Carmona (1876-1965) was a military physician, professor and director of the Faculty of Medicine who oriented his academic activities towards the field of physiology; he was the author of different publications on historical topics.

9. Tomás Perrín (1881-1965). Spanish physician and scientific investigator, graduated from the Valladolid University, entered in our country in 1908; Histology and Descriptive Anatomy professor at the National University and Military Academy. In addition, he devotes an important part of his works to syphilis experimental study and to the discovery of histoplasmosis, a disease until then unknown in Mexico. He was temporary director of the Faculty of Odontology, in 1915, and chairman of the ANM, in 1932. He was awarded with uncountable distinctions for his scientific work, including the Gran Placa de la Cruz Roja, the Caballero de la Real Orden de Isabel la Católica appointment and the French Legion of Honor appointment, as well as the Comendador de la Orden Mexicana del Águila Azteca appointment. In 1955, on the occasion of his professional jubilee, he was appointed professor emeritus of the UNAM.

which were granted by Gustavo Baz in 1942, as director of the National School of Medicine.

Subsequently, the chair of Pharmacology was added to his teaching duties, with an assignment of 3 weekly hours per subject, a chair where Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera displayed his highest creative impulse. His activities in the classroom and the laboratory comprised theoretical and practical lessons, seminars and *repetitorium*, in addition to research works.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera academic activity was widely recognized. For example, in 1944, Ignacio González Guzmán¹⁰ asked him as “one of the most distinguished professors of the Faculty” to rule on the orientation and teaching method of Pharmacology and Pharmacodynamics subjects¹¹.

Serving as an innovative axis in the creation of academic programs at the Faculty, in his 1942 academic report, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera urged on the need to focus on the challenges posed by the establishment of a new subject, as then was experimental pharmacology, challenges that he will subsequently solve more deeply.

Our character assumed the Pharmacology Department direction in 1962 where, loyal to his nature and vocation, he focused on fortifying teaching.

During his leadership, he increased full-professor assignments, with Dr. José Mandoki¹² being the first one to be incorporated; this way, faculty staff was expanded, teaching quality was improved and participation opportunities were increased for teaching personnel, a tactic that helped to better distribute the groups of the discipline.

Furthermore, he recruited young academics, some of whom he supported as grant-holders in institutions abroad, in order to create the Pharmacology Department academic staff. Among these, Dr. Fernando Vázquez Gallo stands out, who was promoted by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera to be appointed as Pharmacology temporary associate professor and with whom he corresponded during his training period at the University of Chile over the 1964-1965 school year¹³ (Figs. 2 and 3). In this period, he started academic exchange activities with University of Chile members, which he

maintained even after Dr. Vázquez Gallo's stay, as reflected in the correspondence between both characters: “We are awaiting your next communication with details of all your activities at that Center, as well as on Teaching Methods, etc.”¹⁴.

In the same way, from the answers sent on May 23, 1965 by Dr. Vázquez Gallo, the following paragraphs are transcribed, which allow for the interest on establishing academic relationships with other institutions to be illustrated:

“Professor, in a letter possibly arriving together with this one, I will roughly explain to you the way the Institute lead by Dr. Jorge Mardones Restat, academic and researcher in the University of Chile, is organized¹⁵, as well as which were, enumerated in detail, the research projects that were being carried out. He took the opportunity to inform about the learning of two easily reproducible techniques to apply in laboratory teaching: “... My activity is focused on learning all techniques here established and since I find them highly interesting for future research works, I have decided trying to master them”¹⁶.

In other correspondence addressed to Dr. Vázquez Gallo on May 13, 1965, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera communicates him about the change of his assignment to temporary associate professor for the time he remained outside the country, an act that confirms the skills and vision Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera possessed for the recruitment and training of human resources¹⁷.

Simultaneously, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera focused on the elaboration of a *Laboratory Practice Manual*, for which he leaned on academic relationships established with members from other Universities, including the Chilean, with Dr. Jorge Mardones, as demonstrated by the answer sent by Dr. Vázquez Gallo:

“Professor, Dr. Mardones is interested in knowing our *Pharmacology Manual [...] they would be immensely grateful if you could send 2 or 3 copies to the University of Chile...*”¹⁸.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera answered in a letter dated June 10, 1965: “... I would like for you to send me as soon as possible interesting practices and innovations (in detail) that we might include in our manual, since

10. Physician, native to Michoacán (1898-1972). He made important studies on the diagnosis and treatment of purpura, hematology of leprosy and onchocerciasis. He was chairman of the ANM (1937-1938). He was granted the National Science Award twice, in 1935 and 1934.

11. AHFM, Personal Académico, vol. 83, exp. 578, f. 34.

12. Mexican physician, senior member of the Pharmacology Department, professor of the same subject from 1968 to this day.

13. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, fs. 71-8.

14. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, f. 72.

15. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, f. 74.

16. Idem.

17. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, fs. 72-3.

18. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, f. 75.

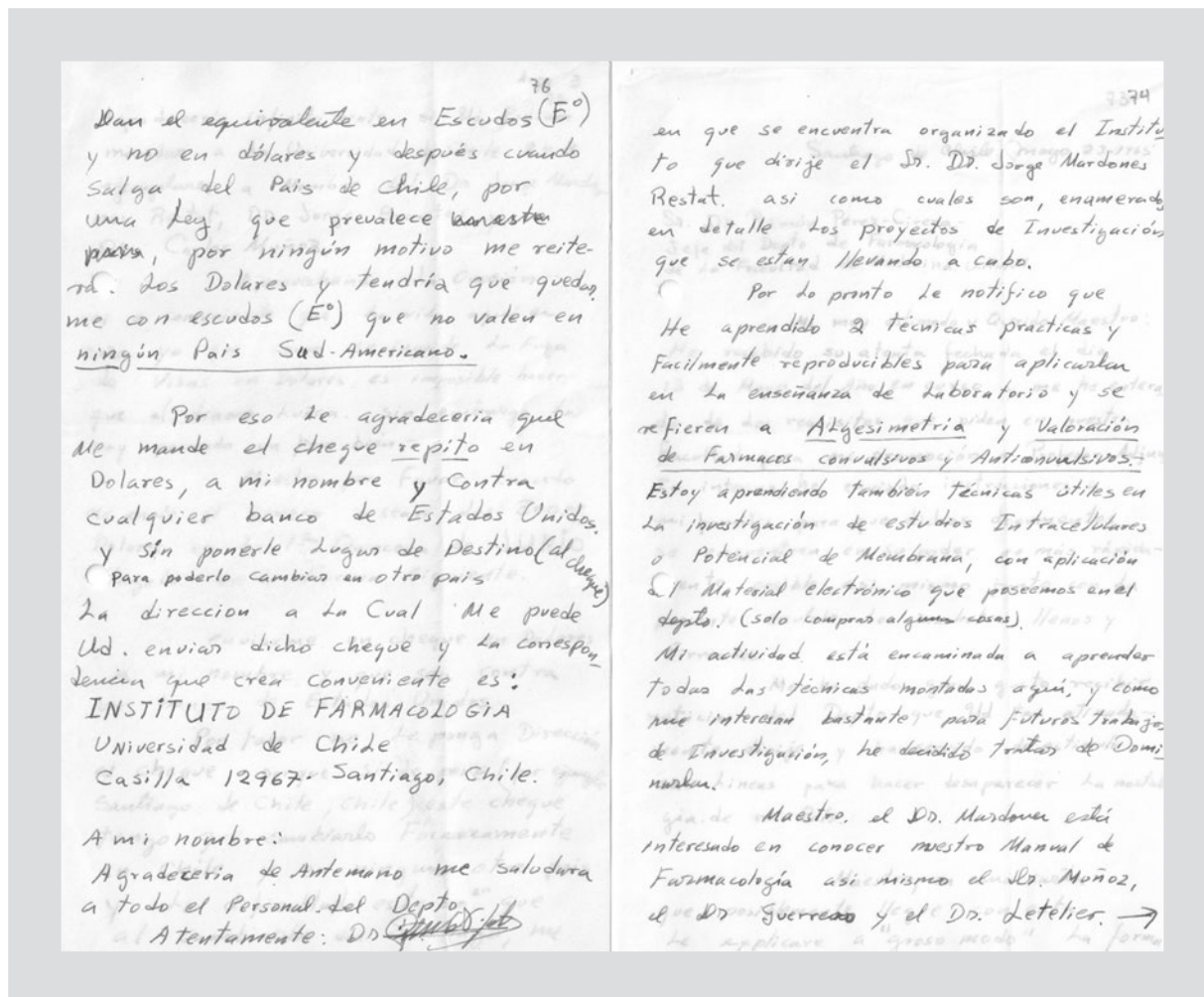


Figure 2. Letter from Dr. Vázquez Gallo to Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, May 23, 1965. AHFM, FRPC. Vol. 5, exp. 96, fs. 74, 76.

we are about to start printing it and we would like for it to turn out as complete as possible and with the highest quality. Thus, I request you this with most urgency and care”¹⁹. It should be mentioned that this manual was reviewed and re-edited every year.

Through relationships such as this one, a professional exchange network was established to the benefit of grant holders and investigation exchange, as evidenced in subsequent letters of Dr. Jorge Mardones where he communicated with Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera to inform on available scholarships, asking our character also to recommend members of the UNAM Pharmacology Department as candidates to these academic benefits²⁰.

These actions helped to strengthen the bonds for the creation of academic bodies such as the Latin American Society of Pharmacology, founded in 1964, the

birth of which led to the organization of congresses and joint activities between universities of different nations. This is part of the heritage of the system that in the past allowed for Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera to complete his training trough the JAE organism.

On the other hand, during the period Dr. Donato Alarcón was at the front of the Faculty of Medicine, the organization of the Juan J. Badiano Institute for the study of medicinal plants, dependent of the Pharmacology Department, was announced, and it was to be established on the following year, 1966²¹. Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera created a research rulebook to organize that departmental activity, based on experiences from other universities.

Dr. Pérez Cirera maintained contact with different colleagues of diverse nationalities, and, of course, with

19. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, f. 78.
20. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, f. 14.
21. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 4, exp. 54, f. 13.

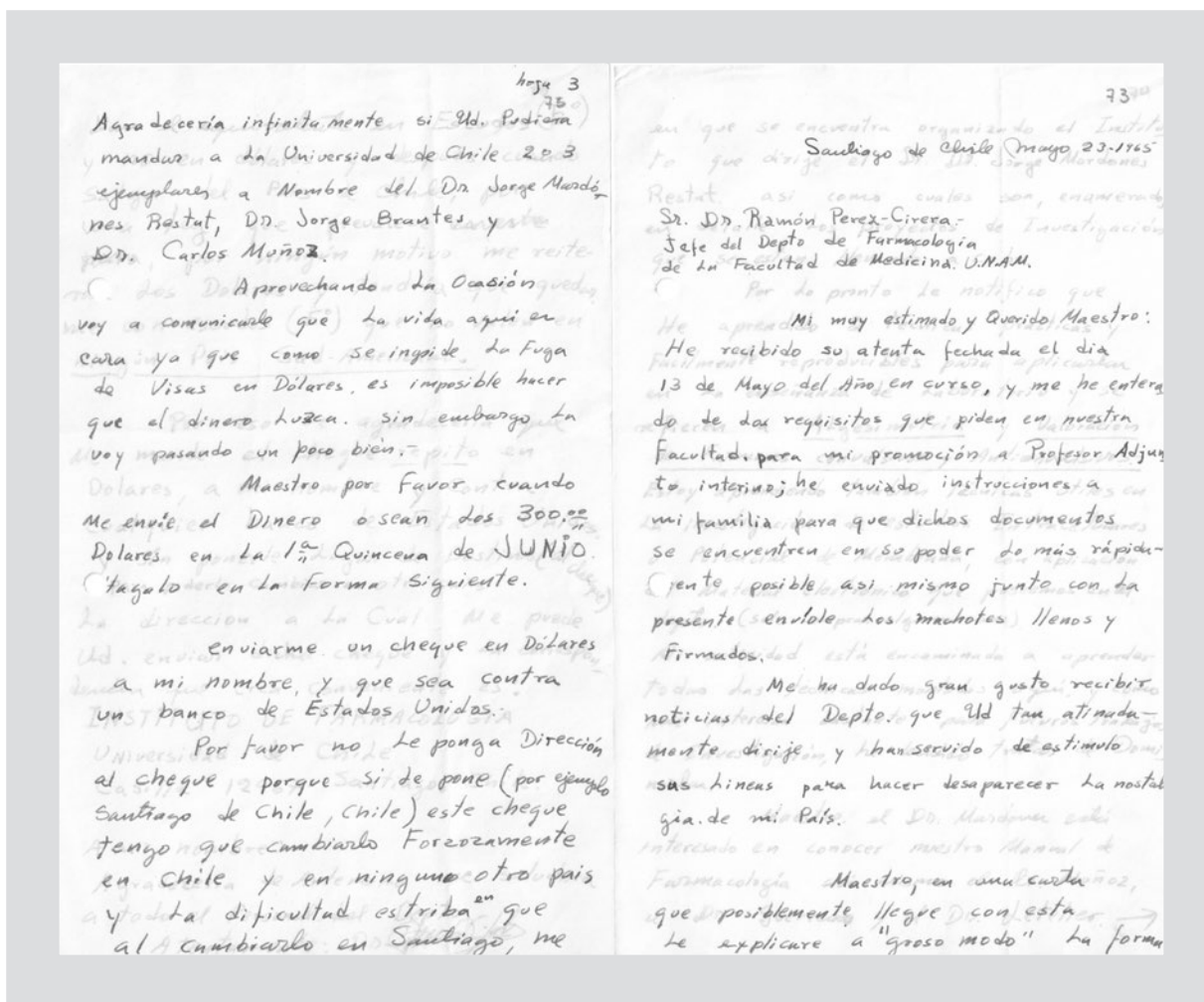


Figure 3. Dr. Vázquez Gallo letter addressed to Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, May 23, 1965. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 5, exp. 96, fs. 73, 75.

Spaniards, such as Dr. Francisco García Valdecasas, Barcelona University Rector in 1965, who also was Pharmacology and Therapeutics full professor at the Faculty of Medicine of that university. With him, he exchanged programs and information on Pharmacology courses in Barcelona, as well as on the pharmacological pathology course for doctorate; in addition, Dr. Francisco García Valdecasas's book *Pharmacological Bases of drug therapeutics*, published by Salvat in the decade of 1960, was sent to Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, who corresponded by sending him his *Pharmacology Manual*²².

In the sphere of postgraduate studies, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera also took care of the development of the program for the Masters' Degree and Doctorate course of the Division of Higher Education. One of his most

original activities was the organization of an Inter-faculty Seminar, between the Faculties of Medicine and Chemistry, represented by the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry with Francisco Giral (1911-2002), his compatriot, an exiled pharmaceutical chemist. The Medicines Seminar common subject mandatorily gathered professors and investigators from both institutions, who contributed with different approaches to the subject to enrich research and teaching. "For almost 20 years, most Spanish doctors exiled in Mexico more or less linked to research and teaching paraded on that Seminar: Don José Puche, Rafael Méndez, Dionisio Nieto, Ramón Álvarez Buylla, Carlos Méndez. The results of this activity were regarded as highly useful for both groups of teachers interested on medication"²³.

22. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 2, exp. 36, fs. 1-37.

23. Giral, F. *Ciencia española en el exilio (1939-1989)*: El exilio de los científicos españoles. Barcelona: Antrophos; Madrid: Centro de Investigación y Estudios Republicanos (CIERE); 1994. pp. 235-6.

This way, the group of exiled Spaniards became integrated to the university community, strengthening academic exchange. "With no holds barred, Pérez Cirera intellectually joined the group with a spirit of open identity"²⁴.

After 20 years at the front of the Pharmacology Department, Dr. Pérez Cirera tendered his resignation as head of the Pharmacology Department on July 29, 1970, in a letter addressed to the Faculty of Medicine director, Dr. Carlos Campillo Sáenz, arguing differences with the personnel; however, he held his appointment as full professor.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera obtained for Mexico to be the host of the II Latin American Pharmacology Congress, celebrated in 1965 and chaired by him. He participated in the creation of the Latin American Pharmacology Association, which he initially was vice-president of (chairs: Rafael Méndez and Víctor M. Santander), and hosting a Latin American natural products permanent office was obtained for Mexico²⁵.

Our character also exchanged letters with USA pharmaceutical companies owing to visits he paid in several occasions to different facilities such as, for example: Abbott, ArmourLab, Squibb and Sons, ChasPfizer and Co., Parke Davis, Lederle and Sharp and Dhome²⁶.

Ramón Pérez Cirera served in 1941 as head of the Experimental Pharmacology Department laboratory of the General Hospital Cardiology Department, which is an important precedent that would later result in its admission to the ANM.

We cannot talk about Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera's intellectual and scientific life without mentioning his incorporation to the ANM of Mexico, which represents the most important professional organization of the country, a conviction of the complete affiliation to the Mexican academic community by the Spanish-origin doctor.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera was accepted by unanimity on January 14, 1942, as newly-admitted member to occupy one of the chairs of the Pharmacology and Pharmacodynamics section. The comment on his admission work entitled "Comparative study between *digitalis purpurea* and *digitalis lanata*"²⁷, addressing the properties of digitalis, was made by Dr. Ignacio Chávez, who also gave his support for his work to be published in the journal *Archivos Latinoamericanos de Cardiología* no. 5, vol. XII rather than in the *Gaceta*

Médica de México, which was the journal where the works of Academy members were regularly published, especially those carried out by newly admitted members.

Dr. Ignacio Chavez refers to Dr. Pérez Cirera's admission work as follows: "There is surely no subject that has served more as a living incentive to a larger legion of researchers... than the one Dr. Pérez Cirera himself has been studying with Guerra at my Cardiology Department²⁸. The subject chosen by Dr. Pérez Cirera is so vast, that the impossibility to approach it at all its aspects is understandable. Hence, surely today he has restricted himself to the fundamentals (...). This house of ours, austere and modest, is until today the most serious of our medical institutions. To give splendor to its ancestry, the Academy looks for the men with the highest prestige in our setting. And not only does it demand scientific capacity in its members, but it also requires high human quality and clean spiritual honesty. By receiving Dr. Pérez Ciresa in its bosom, it consecrates its appreciation to the man devoted to study and research, while consecrating the human virtues that make of him a perfect gentleman"²⁹.

It is evident not only the appreciation but also the support lent by Dr. Ignacio Chávez to our character, a support that surely was a platform to propel his career and facilitate for him joining his laboratory. Dr. Ignacio Chávez also provided material possibilities to carry out the research that enabled his admission to the Academy. The importance of these actions is immense, since Dr. Ignacio Chávez was one of the most important leading figures of Mexican medicine, not only in the ANM, but also in other fields of national life. As the founder of the National Institute of Cardiology, he established exchanges and important alliances for the execution of projects in different academic spheres.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera was member of the Physiology and Pharmacology Section of the National Institute of Cardiology, which was directed by Rafael Méndez, a Spanish pharmacologist and cardiologist. On this regard, there is correspondence between Dr. Ignacio Chávez and Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera of March 30, 1944, where the former asks our character's presence at the National Institute of Cardiology as of April 1.

These facts, together with biographic information at our disposal, support the arguments that have pointed

24. Idem

25. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 2, exp. 40, f. 38.

26. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 2, exp. 23, fs. 1-13.

27. Pérez Cirera, R. Estudio comparativo entre la digitalis purpurea y la digitalis lanata. Gac Med Mex 1943;73:140.

28. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 127, fs. 7-8.

29. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 127, fs. 10-1.

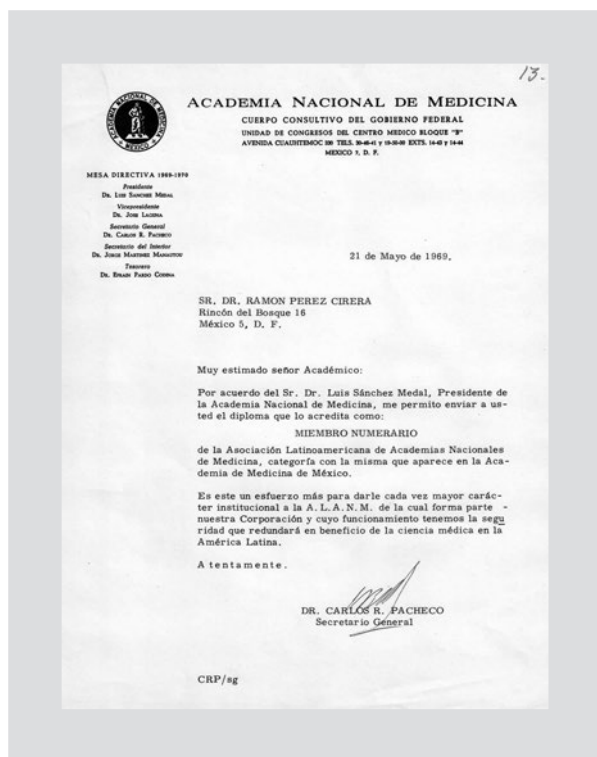


Figure 4. Latin American Academies Association permanent membership notice letter (1969). AHFM, FRPC. Vol. 7, exp. 123, fs. 12,13.

out at Dr. Pérez Cirera's "protégé" condition with regard to Dr. Ignacio Chávez³⁰.

Together with Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, other of his compatriots also joined the Academy, among whom we will mention Dr. Rubén Bretón Manjarrez, who was part of the same section of the Academy and whose admission work was commented by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera³¹. With regard to other chairs assigned on the same year of 1942, Leónides Guadarrama occupied the Forensic Medicine chair, Manuel Fournier the Gynecology chair and José Rábago the Obstetrics chair.

Based on primary sources, it can be claimed that Dr. Pérez Cirera's image was one of an active academician who was respected by the Academy. He maintained close collaboration in different commissions with Dr. Rubén Bretón, such as the conduction of a literature

review on the use of sulfonamides, where Rafael Méndez also participated³². Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera was part of the commission that reviewed Dr. Rubén Bretón's full member application due to health problems³³, and wrote an obituary honoring his memory as well³⁴.

Among other activities developed in the bosom of the Academy, in October 1942. Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera, together with Francisco de P. Miranda and Salvador Aceves, was commissioned to rule on works undertaken by the Medicines Control Office of the Public Health Ministry aiming to come up with an official book to substitute the existing pharmacopeia³⁵.

Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera actively participated in the congress held from April 30 to May 6, 1964, to celebrate the centenary of the Academy. He was in charge of organizing the Pharmacology section in the scientific exhibition, with the presentation of a free work that was published in the commemorative book produced to celebrate the centenary³⁶.

During 1961, the Academy Board of Directors appointed Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera as head of the Pharmacology Section, an appointment he exercised for one year, accomplishing numerous administrative tasks from which written evidence is available³⁷.

A few years later, Dr. Pérez Cirera presided over the Lepetit Award jury, which is granted to outstanding medical investigations, particularly in the field of pharmacology³⁸. In November 1966, for health reasons, he applied to become full member of the Academy, with the petition being granted when Luis Castelazo Ayala was Chairman of the Academy.

Subsequently, in 1969, Dr. Ramón Pérez received a letter informing on his accreditation as Latin American National Academies Association Permanent Member (Fig. 4), "with the same category he appears at the National Academy of Medicine of Mexico"³⁹.

All these actions and written testimonies that can be read in Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera's personal documents, some of them with handwritten inscriptions, enable tracing his activities as a member of the ANM, an important organism for medicine discussion and diffu-

30. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 3, exp. 48.

31. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 129, f. 3.

32. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 123, f. 7.

33. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 130, fs. 4-6.

34. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 130, fs. 7-11.

35. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 129, f. 4.

36. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 130, fs. 13-5; 31-5.

37. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 130, fs. 5-6.

38. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 130, fs. 57-60.

39. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 7, exp. 123, fs. 12,13.

sion, being a member of which meant having access to a multitude of opinions and academic projects, a fertile soil to develop and obtain the support for the aforementioned projects.

There is no doubt that the projects carried out by Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera found support and resources among the ANM members, as also did with the Latin American Pharmacology Association.

Administrative procedures and bureaucracy

As already mentioned at the beginning of this text, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera's arrival does not coincide to that of his compatriots, who found refuge in Mexico thanks to the openness of the *Cardenista* government. He entered the country by personal decision rather than as last political option, and maybe for this reason, the attitude reflected in the handwritten documents of his correspondence exchanges with Spanish doctors and doctors of other nationalities has a hint of authority, self-assurance, and even arrogance, as a reflection of his position in the academic milieu of the country, and particularly in the UNAM.

In 1940, around 500 Spanish doctors, i.e., approximately 10% of national physicians, had to carry out the corresponding administrative procedures to be able to practice in Mexican soil. These procedures consisted in the need to revalidate the corresponding academic degrees, which was a process that in most cases had no established time limit; it was complicated and meant uncertainty for all those doctors who needed to work in the country⁴⁰.

In spite of the evidence on the need of the administrative procedure and the seriousness of the "Commission of Degrees and Study Revalidation" requirements, Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera did not submit the complete documentation, only the appointments of his teaching activities in Spain, but not his high-school diploma or his professional degree certificate, which must have had repercussions in his hiring by the UNAM, as referred by the sources. However, as we have argued, in

spite of everything, the process concluded favorably for Dr. Ramón Pérez Cirera. The corresponding document on this situation reads as follows: "According to regulations, he should be required his professional examination certificate but, in view of his personality and university backgrounds [...] the matter should be brought to the Board for resolution"⁴¹.

Five years after this determination, the University Board published on October 27, 1941, the following: "For Ramón Pérez Cirera to attend for general examination [...] for revalidation of his Surgeon Physician title granted by the University of Madrid according to current regulations..."⁴². This ruling, however, was never obeyed.

Final comment

The second third of the 20th century is marked by a series of economic, political and cultural conditions of unique characteristics in Spain and Mexico.

Central and South American social movements started appearing, with the emergence of ideas of a Latin American identity; the reflection of these social phenomena will be first appreciated in academic spheres, with an intense intellectual exchange between universities and the creation of societies, academies and professional associations that bore the words Latin American as last name, or the purpose of their creation was focused on scientific knowledge exchange and generation between Latin American Countries.

Ramón Pérez Cirera's links with his compatriots abroad, and the training acquired in different European countries made his contribution to Mexican science, particularly to pharmacology, possible. He participated in teaching and presided over, formalized and helped to structure the Pharmacology Department at the Faculty of Medicine of the UNAM. He was member of the ANM, where he had intense activity as an academician, which included reviewing different articles, organizing congresses and other academic activities; he also promoted the creation of specialized associations and intensively and actively participated therein, not only as a member, but as a mentor of young members.

40. Barona, Josep L. (editor). El exilio científico Republicano. Valencia: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Valencia; 2010. p. 12.

41. AHFM, FRPC, vol. 2, exp. 2, f. 10.

42. AHFM, Personal Académico, vol. 83, exp. 578, f. 22.