

Preface to the Special Issue of HETEROCYCLES

in Honour of

Dr. Arnold R. Brossi

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I first met Arnold Brossi almost 35 years ago. As is often the case in science, the magnet that drew us together was a common interest and in our case it was the chemistry of emetine, an alkaloid used for treatment of amoebic dysentery. Also the personal chemistry was right from the outset, we became firm friends and have remained so to this day. So it is for me a great pleasure to contribute this Preface to the volume assembled in his honour.

Arnold has a love affair with the chemistry of biologically active substances from Nature. The excitement, the enthusiasm and the burning interest he shows for these materials all reveal his emotional attachment. These are the features of his relationship to science which so stimulate his colleagues, young and older. Add to these his impressively broad knowledge of medicinally active drugs and it is clear why his career has included posts of high seniority and importance in industry, in Europe and the U.S.A., in medical research institutes and in Universities. His influence on people and events in all these different areas has been immense.

These achievements have been recognized by many awards and honours of which the Alfred Burger Award (U.S.A.), the Charles Mentzer Prize (France) and Hanus Medal (Czechoslovakia) are simply examples showing his international standing.

It is outside the scope of this Preface to make any sort of comprehensive review of Arnold Brossi's many publications, approaching 400 in number. However, some can be picked out as fine examples of his approach. His outstanding work on emetine and dehydroemetine, on the *Colchicum* alkaloids and on the active materials from the calabar bean will serve this purpose well. Here we see his special interest in stereochemistry and absolute configuration and in the design of practical routes and preparative methods that yield useful quantities of material.

I remember well Arnold saying that he was not interested in preparing a milligram to get a spectrum; he wanted enough for further work. His procedures allow that, they work smoothly and his experimental directions act as models. Also his interest in writing and good publications has drawn him to serving the community as a member of several editorial boards. Moreover, when the monumental series of books on The Alkaloids, first edited by Manske, needed a new torch bearer, it was Arnold Brossi who picked it up and carried the task forward.

Arnold's friends not only respect his science, they are attracted by his warm, outgoing personality and by his generosity; it is fun to be with him. He loves good food and good wine and there are many fortunate people all over the world who, like me, have shared these delights with him. Though I have emphasized his powerful commitment to science, he nevertheless puts family first. So he enters his 71st year with his family happy and secure and they are a source of great strength and support for his efforts.

Everyone involved in the initiative leading to this special volume joins me in congratulating Arnold Brossi and in giving him our warmest good wishes for the future. We can be confident that important new science in the area of biologically active materials will continue to flow from his outstanding leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Battersby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Alan Battersby

February 1994