A Foreword to “On the Disintegration of the Positive Heavy Meson” by Elisa Frota Pessoa and Neusa Margem

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Accepted: 24 August 2021 / Published online: 13 September 2021
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The paper we have the privilege to translate into English and present here [1] was originally published in 1950, in Portuguese, in the *Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências*, the official scientific journal of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. It has historical importance not only because it was the first paper published by the recently founded Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas (CBPF) in Rio de Janeiro, but especially because it is probably the first publication where strong evidence in favor of the V-A structure of the weak currents were presented. For further details on the scientific and historic backgrounds of these discoveries, notably the role played by the Brazilian theorist J. Tiomno, see [2–4]. The Frota Pessoa and Margem’s results, if broadly known at the time, could have advanced in a decade the choice for the V-A current for the description of weak interactions. The context of this paper also suggests other interesting interpretations, especially in view of the recent discussions

around the presence and role of women in Physics on the one hand and, on the other, the difficulties faced by researchers of peripheral countries and the effects on their careers. To which extent such kind of obstacles has interfered in the priority attribution of Frota Pessoa and Margem’s pioneer experimental discovery is certainly something worth investigation.

References

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