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In memoriam Prof. Carlo Alberto Pagni



Prof. Pagni giving his lecture in Venice (May, 2008)

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Prof. Carlo Alberto Pagni

(13 February 1931 – 2 March 2009)

Sad news reached the KWA community last week: our Italian member Prof. Carlo Alberto Pagni had completely unexpectedly passed away in Milan on Monday, 2nd of March. Nobody could know that after his 78th birthday – we still congratulated him at the end of February – only such a short time was left to him.

Born in the seaport of La Spezia (Ligurian), Carlo Alberto Pagni decided on a study of medicine, and he became a professor of neurology and neurosurgery. It is not possible to give here a more detailed sketch of his work at the different Italian universities, he himself has only briefly listed the essential stations of his career in his [Curriculum vitae](#).

As a 16-year-old youth Carlo Alberto had started playing chess, but study and profession have put an early end to these activities. It was not until 1970 that he made a new start in the field of correspondence chess, that was the passion which should accompany him till the day he died.

From about the mid-nineties he has also distinguished himself as an author in his chosen field, above all he devoted himself to the early history of correspondence chess. Numerous articles in chess magazines and an imposing number of book publications tell of his enormous commitment – a complete [list of his books](#) is

given here (courtesy of Alessandro Sanvito). From his last work, *Telescacchi d'Autore* (2008), we show a reproduction of the [cover](#) with an additional photo of the author.

Shortly after our foundation Carlo Alberto Pagni joined the KWA, and it was in the last 3 years that the relations "stabilized" – apparent signs were the meetings in Turin 2006 and in Venice 2008 where our professor took part. In this context we should also mention that C.A. Pagni formed – together with three other KWA members (Ivan Bottlík, Tim Harding and Eric Ruch) – the *Historical Research Committee* (HRC) of the ICCF (source: minutes of the ICCF Congress 2008).

A few voices and memories of friends or companions may draw a more personal picture of the deceased than I (R.B.) am able to do:

Michael Negele: "We (the KWA) have lost a highly respected scientist and a pioneer in the field of brain surgery whose true passion – like that of Bruno Bassi – was 'chess research' in a quite limited field. But impressing was Carlo's 'flexibility' and 'vigour' to devote himself again and again to new subjects as 'chess via telephone' or the 'CC career of Paul Keres'. (In the preparation of the latter I could be a little bit helpful.) His partly unique compilations will be missed in future. Moreover I will miss an always kind but also strong-willed friend I have been in regular contact with since the autumn of 2003 and whom I owe an interesting experience with 'Italian conditions' at the Chess Olympiad Turin 2006."

Luca D'Ambrosio recalls: "... on February 12th I still corresponded with Pagni about a German version of his book on the CC games of Paul Keres. As usual, he seemed to me to be full of energy and ideas. I am glad to have met Professor Pagni personally in May last year. As a newcomer of the KWA I am not able to pay tribute to the person and to the work of the deceased in an appropriate way, surely others could do that much better. Though as a newcomer I was very touched when at a walk through Venice Pagni came up to me, took me by the arm and asked me in detail about my research and interests. A few weeks ago Professor Pagni sent me a short contribution to the commemorative publication in honour of Alessandro Sanvito – I fear that it was his last article. To my knowledge he worked hard, together with Antonio Rosino, on the biography of Stefano Rosselli del Turco. Obviously Antonio has to complete that now on his own."

Antonio Rosino: "Pagni paid frequently lengthy visits to me in Venice to consult the library of the Italian Chess Federation [at present kept safe by A. Rosino].

Pagni was a very eminent specialist and the first to head a chair of neurology in Italy (University of Turin). Furthermore he was chairman of the Italian Society of Neurology (Società di Neurologia). Still in his lifetime he has bequeathed a large collection of rare medical magazines to a German university.

Pagni finished his university career in 2003 and devoted intensively to chess. In spite of his age he used very competently and efficiently the new media such as the internet, in American papers for instance he could track down quite a lot of unpublished CC games. It does the chess world credit to have had a Pagni within their ranks."