

Daniel Asheri (Bonaventura)

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When their mother decided to leave by ship and take them with her, his brothers David and Emanuel were 13 and 11 years old while he was only 3. He grew up in Jerusalem where he studied and graduated in 1963, then most of his academic career was in Tel Aviv, where he became a world-known Nuclear Physicist. Daniel Ashery adopted this surname in 1957, giving up his father's Italian name Bonaventura as his elder brothers did before him and as was then customary in Israel. He visited Italy often, and maintained the citizenship of the homeland of his father, from whom he was orphaned at the age of 12.

Origin and family

Daniel was born in Florence on May, 23, 1936 to Enzo Bonaventura, professor of Psychology at the University of Florence and Matilde Passigli. His parents got married in 1921 and had two older sons: David, born 1925 and Emanuel, born 1928. As a result of the racial laws of autumn 1936 his father was expelled from the University of Florence, where he taught and directed the Institute and laboratory of Experimental Psychology without a regular academic position. Without work and with a family to support he decided he must search abroad and first in Palestine where he had good connections after years of activity in the Florentine Zionist group. He left for Jerusalem in March 1939, there he competed and won the temporary assignment for teaching Psychology at the Hebrew University.

Life and career in Palestine

As agreed, Matilde with the three children followed him, arriving to Jerusalem with a *Palestine immigrant certificate*, released by the Department of

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immigration on 20 September 1939¹. There Daniel attended school. In 1947 his father returned to Italy to check the possibility to re-enter the competition for a university-teacher's desk in his discipline, after arriving second in the previous competition 18 years earlier. This opportunity could have changed again the lives of all of them, but Enzo Bonaventura became convinced that the competition was unfavorable for him and resumed his work in Jerusalem, where in the meantime, despite the difficult times he obtained a permanent position as founder and head of the Psychology department. On the way to work at the Mount Scopus campus, on April 13, 1948 he was victim of the known attack on the Hadassah convoy of medical staff escorted by British troops². Out of 115 passengers 97 were murdered, among them one more Florentine, Anna Di Gioacchino Cassuto. Daniel was 12 when he lost his father. His brothers, 22 and 20 were engaged in underground activity against the British government while he continued his studies in Jerusalem. There, in high-school he met Aviva Shapira, a classmate and future wife. He graduated high-school in 1954, and while his brother Emanuel decided to return to Italy, Daniel enlisted in the Israel Defense Force and served 3 years as an officer. He studied Physics at the Hebrew University, graduated in 1963 and moved to Rehovot where he did his PhD at the Weizman Institute of Technology. After a two-year Post-doc in the California Institute of Technology he settled with his family in Tel-Aviv and joined the Physics Department at TAU where he toughed and researched experimental Nuclear Physics. In 1982 he was nominated full professor; in 1988 became head of the School of Physics and Astronomy of Tel-Aviv University and in 2003 he became emeritus-professor³. He remained active in research until two months before his death in June 27,

¹ The date on the *Palestine immigrant certificate*, Department of immigration, Jerusalem, 20 September 1939, in Asheri family archives. I got a copy of the document and permission to publish it by Daniel Bonaventura himself, the 11 June 2016. Cfr. the list in Arturo Marzano, *Una terra per rinascere. Gli ebrei italiani e l'emigrazione in Palestina*, Genova-Milan, Marietti, 2003, pp. 364-365.

² Harry Levin, *Jerusalem Embattled. A Diary of the City under Siege*, London, Cassel, 1997.

³ See the biographical notes in <<https://www.tau.ac.il>> (accessed 6 February 2019).

2018. With his wife Aviva he had three children (Rachel Bonaventura Snir, Yoram Ashery and Ohad Ashery, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren (one born after his death).

Main Publications

The list of his 166 scientific publications in <<http://inspirehep.net>>.

- D. Ashery, A.E. Blaugrund, R. Kalish, J.S. Sokolowski, Z. Vager, *E2/M1 Mixing Ratios and K Conversion Coefficients of Some Rotational Transitions*, «Nuclear Physics», 67, 1965, pp. 385-394.
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- *Study of the $^{22}\text{Ne}(\alpha, n)^{25}\text{Mg}$ Reaction, A Possible Source of Stellar Neutrons*, «Nuclear Physics», 136, 1969, pp. 481-495.
- D. Ashery, M. Zaider, Y. Shamai, S. Cochavi, M.A. Moinester, A.I. Yavin and J. Alster, *Interaction of Positive and Negative Pions with ^{27}Al and ^{28}Si* , «Physical Review Letters», 32, 1974, pp. 943-946.
- M. Zaider, D. Ashery, S. Cochavi, S. Gilad, M.A. Moinester, Y. Shamai and A.I. Yavin, *De-Excitation Gamm Rays from the Interaction of 70 MeV Pions with S-D Shell Nuclei*, «Physical Review», C16, 1977, pp. 2313-2324.
- *Pion Nucleus Reactions*, «Nuclear Physics», A354, 1981, pp. 555-576.
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- Con J.P. Schiffer, *Pion Absorption in Nuclei*, «Annual Review of Nuclear and Particle Science», 36, 207, 1986.
- *Pion Absorption in He - A Window to Sub-Fermi Nuclear Physics*, «Nuclear Physics», A478, 603, 1988.
- *Search for the Pentaquark and H Dibaryon*, «Hyperfine Interactions», 103, 253, 1996.
- E. M. Aitala, S. Amato, J.C. Anjos, J.A. Appel, D. Ashery et al.,

Measurements of Lifetimes and a Limit on the Lifetime Differences in the Neutral D-Meson System, «Physical Review Letters», 83, 32, 1999.

- *Measurement of Light-Cone Wave Functions by Diffractive Dissociation*, «Nuclear Physics», (sup) B90, 67, 2000.
- *Measurement of the Photon Light-cone Wave Function by Diffractive Dissociation*, «Nuclear Physics B. Proceedings Supplements», 161, 8, 2006.
- The ZEUS Collaboration, H. Abramowicz, D. Ashery et al., *Exclusive Electroproduction of two Pions at HERA*, «The European Physical Journal», C72, 1869, 2012.
- M. Anholm, S. Behling, J.A. Behr, I Cohen, B. Fenker et.al., *Physics beyond the Standard Model with Trapped Atoms in the LHC Era*, «Il Nuovo Cimento», 39C, 346, 2016.

Archival Sources

- Written testimonies of his daughter Rachel Bonaventura Snir to the a., 2 December 2018 - 13 February 2019.

Bibliography

- Biographical profile on the Tel Aviv University website, in hebrew <<https://www.tau.ac.il>>.

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