

ECT * hosted a remembrance ceremony for Professor Renzo Leonardi, the “father” of Trentino physics and of the Proton Therapy Center

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Professor Renzo Leonardi, one of the "fathers" of physics in Trento and of the Povo department of the University, as well as of ECT *, the European Center for Theoretical Nuclear Physics at Fondazione Bruno Kessler, passed away on July 6, at the age of 79

The professor, one of the founders of the Trento Proton Therapy Center, was remembered this morning with a **ceremony attended by numerous authorities from the academic world but also by local politicians**, including the Province councilor for Economic and Employment Development, the mayor of Trento, ECT* director Jochen Wambach, FBK Board member Dr. Anna Perini (representing also secretary-general Andrea Simoni), University of Trento President Paolo Collini, Physics Department director Antonio Miotello. The ceremony was held precisely at one of Leonardi's “creatures”, the ECT*: established in 1993 within the former Trentino Institute of Culture, now FBK, with the support of the international scientific community, it is considered by the European Union as a “Major research European Infrastructure ” and annually attracts hundreds of researchers to Villazzano for conferences and projects of high scientific value.



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In the talks that followed one another, **Leonardi was remembered as a scientist capable of combining top-level theoretical research with scientific-technological impacts**, but also as a scholar who made two apparently distant fields of knowledge interact, Physics and art, by virtue of his recognized competence in this field as well, with particular reference to Flemish painting. **Leonardi had received his education at the Normale di Pisa and at the University of Bologna.** After becoming a professor in theoretical physics in 1971, his scientific career had continued in Genoa and Catania, finally leading him to Trento in 1977. Among other things, Leonardi had developed a strong interest in the field of Nuclear Physics applied to Medicine. This had prompted him, since 2002, to propose to the Province the creation in Trento of a Proton Therapy Center, that would be at the forefront in the treatment of particular types of cancer. A Center that became reality in 2014. But Leonardi, as recalled by the Province councilor for education, had also glimpsed the new frontiers of research, in the biotechnology establishment of Cibio.













Leonardi was a scholar “**sensitive to the concrete impact of theoretical research, capable of improving people’s lives**“, Perini pointed out, a multifaceted man with many interests, a regular in the most prestigious academic and research European and global organizations with the rare gift of knowing how to dialogue with institutions, with those who were called to decide on the creation of a new research center or the adoption of innovative technology. This is a summary of the scholar remembered today by many colleagues and friends, a great scientist and a great humanist, free from the temptation to have people talk about him, capable of retaining his poise in all circumstances.

“When Leonardi arrived in Trento – Collini said – the city was not yet a center of academic and scientific excellence like it is today. Leonardi was among those who knew how to cultivate a wider vision for the area, and he always did it, in every challenge he undertook in his life“.

The ceremony, which culminated with the dedication to the scholar of one of the halls of the Villa Tambosi Center, went on with the talks by Georges Ripka, from the University of Paris-Saclay, by Marco Traini, from the University of Trento – who told the audience the totally engaging story of Leonardi’s study of a Van Eick miniature depicting the birth of John the Baptist – and by some other officials who have had the opportunity to get to know and work with Leonardi in the past.

Images by Alessandro Girardi

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