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When, Why and How to Attribute the Credit of a Scientific or Technological Discovery? The “case study” of Chester Carlson and Augusto Righi

Monday, 8 October 2012 16:50 (20 minutes)

The complex theme of the determination, like the exact date or the original author, of a discovery will be discussed as a preliminary part of this talk. The main part will be devoted to the unusual case of the first production of the fotostatic system.

It is common to attribute to Chester Carlson the realization of this system (1938) and the first image produced: “10.-22.-38 ASTORIA”. But it could be interesting, since almost completely unknown, to learn that it was Augusto Righi that, as early as in 1881, developed an effective, but of course elementary, electrostatic system and obtained similar results.

It will be shown several images produced by Righi with his “electric shadows” system, together with a recent and functioning replica of Righi’s apparatus, that can confirm his outstanding application.

Summary

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