TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS delivered by **PROFESSOR J. FLAVIN,** National University of Ireland, Galway on 28th June, 2002 on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa, on **PROFESSOR SALVATORE RIONERO**

A Sheansailéir, agus a mhuintir na hOllscoile,

Salvatore Rionero was born in the 1930's in the town of Nola, in the greater Naples region, in southern Italy. Having had an excellent cultural and scientific formation at a Classical Lyceum, he proceeded to study Mathematics and Physics at the University of Naples; this University is more precisely known as the University of Naples of Federico the Second, after the enlightened king who founded it about eight centuries ago.

Salvatore Rionero graduated in 1955 with the highest distinction, and in 1956 became an assistant to Tolotti, the Professor of Rational Mechanics there; this entailed teaching that subject and undertaking research on gyroscopic forces. Having held the positions of Assistant and Associate Professor at Naples until 1968, he was then appointed to a full Professorship of Rational Mechanics. He held this at the University of Bari until 1971, and has held it at Naples since then.

Following his researches on gyroscopic forces, his research interests focused on phenomena arising in fluids and solids, as modelled by equations called partial differential equations, and he maintains this interest down to this day. Perhaps his best known publications have to do with the stability of fluid motion, and with phenomena as aforesaid in the context of unbounded, or infinite, spatial domains.

The impressive level of his research and other scholarly activity is attested by the following facts: he is the author/co-author of some six books and over one hundred papers, and also editor of numerous conference proceedings; of those who undertook research under his direction, some seven hold Professorships, and some six Assistant or Associate Professorships; he is a Member of L'Accademia Nazionale di Lincei, the pre-eminent Italian Academy; and he has received many invitations to lecture all over the globe.

He is well known as one of the founders, and Director since 1980, of the internationally renowned, annual Summer School in Mathematical Physics at Ravello, situated on the Amalfi coast, south of Naples. The students are generally young Italian researchers and the distinguished lecturers are drawn from all over the world. He is by his commitment to the School playing his part in ensuring the continuance of the great Italian tradition in Mathematical Science - a tradition that may be said to extend back more than two millennia to Magna Grecia - that is, to the Greek civilization in southern Italy, to Archimedes and Pythagoras.

The great beauty of the Amalfi region, in which Ravello, the location of the School, is situated, is eloquently conveyed by the Italian saying: *il giorno del giudizio, per gli Amalfitani che andranno in paradiso, sará un giorno come tutti gli altri*; that is, for those Amalfi people who go to paradise, the day of judgment will be a day just like all the others. Indeed, Ravello means much to Salvatore on a personal level: it was there, in the 1960s, that he married his eighteen year old bride, Giuseppina Del Giudice. We are happy to welcome her here today. Benvenuta, Signora!

To all these must be added his primary role in conceiving and organizing the biennial, international conference on Waves and Stability in Continuous Media; its high scientific standards are matched by its enchanting locations, for example, the Aeolian Islands, Taormina

He has also held many positions of responsibility in his own University and nationally. For example, he has been Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the National Group for Mathematical Physics, and is currently Senior Vice-President of INDAM, the National Institute for Advanced Mathematics.

Salvatore Rionero presented his first mathematical paper (on gyroscopic forces) to a meeting of the Italian Mathematical Union at Naples in 1959. The records of this meeting show that another man presented thereat what was probably his last mathematical paper: he was a former President of this institution, the late Monsignor Pádraig de Brún, polymath, and translator into Irish of Dante's *La Divina Commedia* as well as of Homer and other classical authors (of the Mediterranean).

The academic/research contacts, symbolized by this, between Mathematical Science at Galway and at Naples, have been re-enacted in our own day, both in the fields of Algebra and Mathematical Physics. In this, Salvatore Rionero has been an active participant, and a facilitator, where appropriate.

Dá réir sin uile, A Sheansailéir, ba chúis áthais agus onóra é d'Ollscoil na hÉireann céim oinigh a bhronnadh ar Salvatore Rionero di Napoli.

PRAEHONORABILIS CANCELLARIE, TOTAQUE UNIVERSITAS:

Praesento vobis, hunc meum filium quem scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneum esse qui admittatur, honoris causa, ad gradum Doctoratus in utroque Jure, tam Civili quam Canonico, idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo totaeque Academiae