

LETTER OF L. RAMÓN Y CAJAL¹

Madrid, May 26, 1984

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Apical Dendrite, Cajal Club
University of Colorado

Dear Sir:

Pardon my attempt at writing to you without knowing you and excuse the fact that it is in Spanish, since I don't know English. It is very touching to me that you as the president (sic) of the Cajal Club, demonstrate such a profound admiration, affection and respect for the scientific figure of my father.

Surely, you have read some biography of his and you are acquainted with his life. If you have read his autobiography, or one written by persons who knew him personally, you will know the real Cajal. If it is by way of one of the biographies which have appeared these last years, I fear that the Cajal they have presented is not the genuine one, but a product of the mental fabrications of the authors interpreting the autobiography of my father at their pleasure.

I have taken advantage of the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of my father's death and have written a short article about the authentic manner in which my father lived. It gives me much pleasure to send it to you hoping that the members of the prestigious Club Cajal, who respect him so much, will get to know him better.

It has been a very emotional and comforting experience for me to read the article in which the American neurosurgeons have paid him homage in Boston this last month of April. If he were alive today, Cajal would be very happy to see that his works have not remained antiquated, but which today are a fundamental base of the actual neurosciences. This renewal of the work of all his life is the best tribute which can be offered to him, something which would have pleased him so much.

I doubt very much that here, in his own country, they have done him the justice that the American scientists have shown him. The tributes that are organized here are made more for the personal gain of the authors who never relate anything new about Cajal, and who rarely speak about the full impact of his work. My deepest appreciation to all of the members which make up the Club Cajal for displaying a true fondness for my father.

It gives me great pleasure to send you a family picture taken a few years ago.² In the picture are my father, my son, Santiago Ramón y Cajal Junquera, and myself. My son is the only male grandchild and carries his grandfather's name. He is a professor of pathologic anatomy.

Both my son, Santiago, in the scientific aspect, as well as my daughter in the human, dedicate themselves to making the figure and personality of their grandfather better known. This has been kept silenced for so many years in this country.

Remaining at your complete disposition, I greet you cordially,

L. Ramón y Cajal

¹This letter accompanied the manuscript, Cajal, As Seen by His Son, written by L. Ramón y Cajal. While translated from the Spanish, this letter has not been edited.

²This photograph is reproduced on the following page.

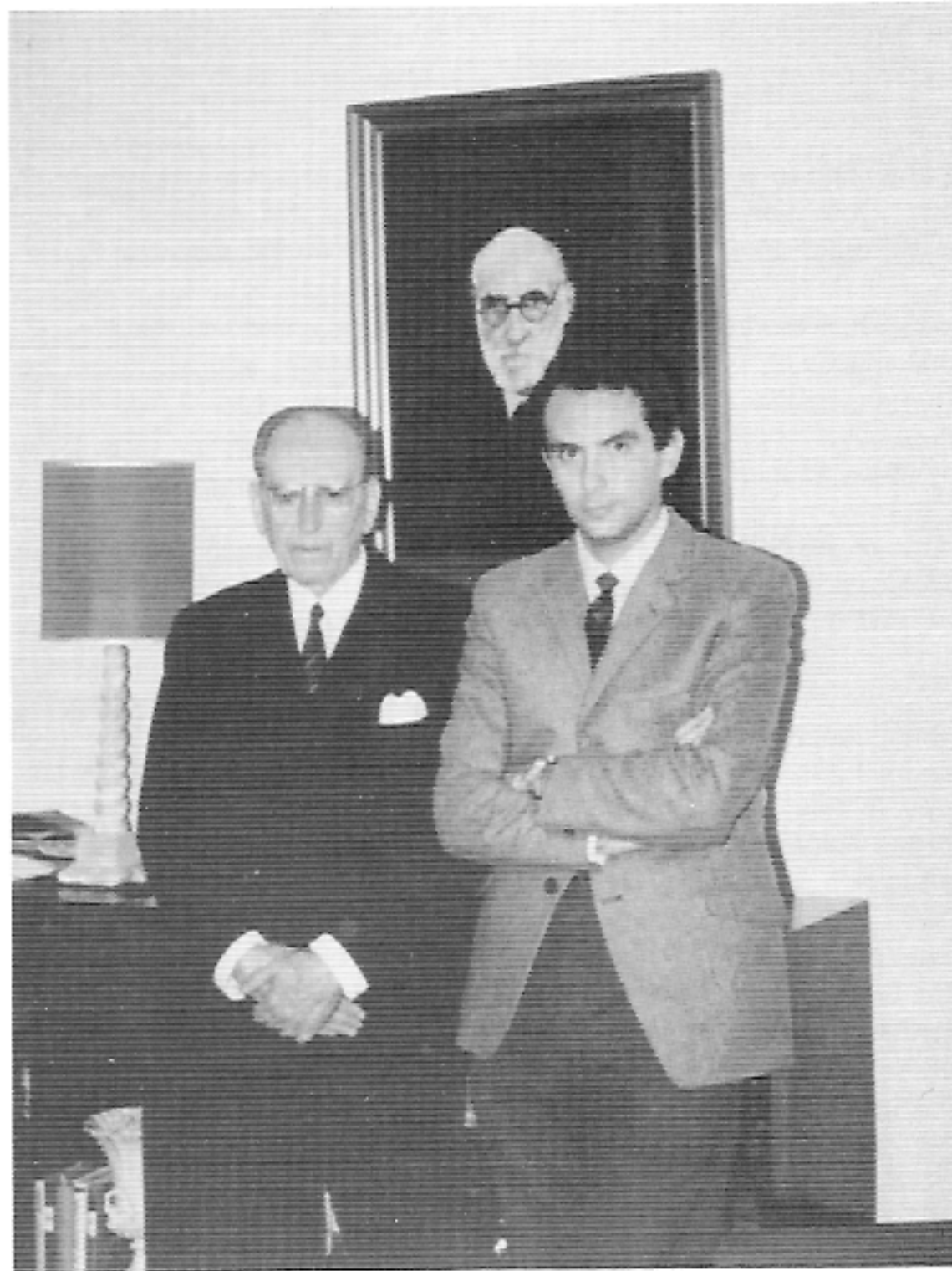


Figure 29. Three generations of Cajal. From left to right Luis Ramón y Cajal, Don Santiago Ramón y Cajal (picture), and Santiago Ramón y Cajal Junquera.