



Editorial Overview

## In memory of Lesser Blum



This issue is devoted to the memory of Lesser Blum, one of the leaders of the modern theory of electrolyte solution. We express our deepest condolences to his family, colleagues, and friends.

Lesser was born in Berlin in 1934. This was not an auspicious time and place for a Jew. Fortunately, he and his family were able to flee to Argentina in 1942, just before the 'final solution'. Lesser attended the University of Buenos Aires and obtained his Ph.D. in 1956. Unfortunately, at this time there was little encouragement for research in Argentina so Lesser spent a few years as an industrial chemist. His position was in the docks of Buenos Aires. He related an amusing story about a Scandinavian ship that was docked next to his employer. The ship was painted a gleaming white. Presumably it was painted with a lead based paint. The scrubber of the factory failed and plume of noxious gases was emitted. The ship's paint turned black instantly and the ship's captain came out screaming. Who paid for the repainting is not known to us.

In 1955 Juan Peron was ousted and the atmosphere for research improved and Lesser was able to return to the University of Buenos Aires and engage in research and assist in rebuilding the scientific program of the university. Several scholars visited the university. One was Roger Parsons, who lectured on electrochemistry. This had a lasting influence on Lesser.

Lesser was able to obtain fellowships to work in Ottawa, Canada, and Brussels, Belgium. In Brussels he worked with Prigogine and became skilled in statistical mechanics. Around this time, he met and married Elisa (Lita) Sasson. It was a happy marriage. They had three sons Jorge (George), Steven, and Leonardo (Lennie). He was a devoted husband and father.

The situation in Argentina, with frequent coups, led Lesser and Lita to leave Argentina. First, he worked with Zevi Salsburg at Rice University on chemically reactive fluid systems and kinetic theory [1–5]. Later in 1968 he accepted a position at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), where he remained for most of his scientific career. At the UPR, Lesser played a significant role in the development of statistical mechanics/condensed matter research areas in the Department of Physics during his 37 year career, and helped seal international recognition for the University for pioneering research in these areas. An important contribution in this regard was his effort to attract important scientists to visit the Department, which had lasting positive influence on the academic environment. It was at the UPR that Lesser began to work of the physics and chemistry of electrolyte solutions and electrochemistry. He was also a member of the UPR Academic Senate during the years 1980–1982 representing the Faculty of Natural Sciences. He retired from the UPR in 2005 and moved to New Jersey to be near his children and sister. He held visiting positions at Rutgers and Princeton and was active until his health failed. A photograph of Lesser that was taken during his retirement ceremony is part of this essay. We thank Ronald Selsby of the Department of Physics, UPR, for the photograph and his permission to reproduce it.

The word that comes to mind when thinking about the long academic career of Lesser is *prolific*. His scholarly productivity throughout his career has been truly *prolific* in every sense of the word. Having published his first research paper in 1959 [6], he never looked back, and over the next five decades published around 300 more and established collaborations with scientists in at least five continents. Along the way he was on the organizing committee of many international scientific conferences and was on the editorial boards of many scientific journals. He received several awards. Among them was a Guggenheim Fellowship (1978), fellowship in the American Physical Society (1982), and the Joel Hildebrand Award of the American Chemical Society (2003). He also served as Programme Director of the Theoretical Chemistry Division of the National Science Foundation in 1996–1997, while being an Adjunct Professor of Chemistry at Georgetown University.

Most of the scientific works of Lesser are connected with the analytical solutions of the Ornstein-Zernike integral equation for different fluid models in the mean spherical approximation (MSA) introduced by Lebowitz and Percus [7]. For ionic fluids he found [8–10] the solution for an electrolyte model consisting of ions with arbitrary size and charge. Here he introduced the now famous parameter  $\Gamma$ , that is a generalization of the Debye-Hückel screening parameter  $\kappa$  [11]. Lesser showed that this parameter is sufficient for the description of thermodynamic and structural properties of ionic systems. The MSA results for thermodynamics were successfully used for the description of thermodynamical properties of electrolyte solutions [12–15]. Lesser next turned his attention to the case of an electrolyte next to a charged interface, otherwise known as electric double layer phenomenon — one of the important problems in electrochemistry. The results for pair distribution functions in framework of the Henderson-Abraham-Barker theory [16] were successfully applied for the description of such electrolyte solutions near charged surfaces [17–27]. In collaboration with Henderson and Bhuiyan [28] the analytic solution of the classical Gouy-Chapman-Stern theory for the planar electric double layer was found for electrolytes that are asymmetric in both ion size and charge. Some important exact results were formulated in this field such as the contact theorem for density profile of ions near charged wall [19,20].

In parallel with the MSA treatment of ionic models Lesser considered more realistic models for electrolyte solutions, which include the polar solvent molecules explicitly. Since the pair correlation functions for molecules with electrostatic interactions have orientation dependencies, Lesser developed the general scheme of orientational invariant expansions for pair correlation functions and formulated a general scheme of the MSA solution for the coefficients of these expansions [29–32]. The simplest such ion-molecular model is the ion-dipolar model represented by a three-component mixture of positively and negatively spheres and hard spheres with embedded dipoles with the equal ionic and molecular sizes. The MSA solution for such a simplified ion-dipole model was first obtained by Lesser [33,34] and later this solution was simplified and analyzed by him and coworkers [35–37]. The MSA solution was also generalized for the ion-dipole model with different ionic and molecular sizes [38–43]. The obtained results are more complicated than for ionic model. However it was found in this solution the two scaling parameters,  $\Gamma$  for ions and  $\lambda$  for dipoles [43–45], define the thermodynamic properties of ion-dipole model. The obtained results obtained for the ion-dipole model were successfully applied for the description of the Gibbs' solvation energies of monovalent monoatomic ions in different polar solvents [46,47]. For the description of aqueous solutions Lesser improved the model of dipolar hard sphere by adding the tetrahedral orientational interactions [48–50]. He used the results for the ion-dipole model successfully for the description of electrolyte solutions near charged hard walls [51–54]. Around this time Lesser, along with other co-authors, formulated the exact sum rules for an inhomogeneous charged system connected with the effects of the screening of electrostatic interactions [55–57]. Some other exact asymptotic relations, for thermodynamic properties of charged systems were formulated by L. Blum together with Y. Rosenfeld [58–60].

Lesser also considered the MSA solution for fluids with Yukawa type of inter-particle interactions. The results were used to the study bulk and surface properties and for the improvement of the closure relations in the Ornstein-Zernike equation [61–65]. For the MSA solution for fluids with multi-Yukawa interactions it was shown that for such fluids it is also possible to introduce a scaling parameter  $\Gamma$  and the structural and thermodynamic properties can be described in term of this parameter [66–71].

A new promising approach for the investigation of adsorption of fluids on crystalline surfaces was developed by Lesser together with Badiali and Rosinberg in 1986 [72]. In this paper, the interface between solid and fluid is modelled by a flat surface with sticky sites placed on a regular lattice. After averaging over the fluid configuration, the model

was mapped into a two-dimensional lattice-gas model with the interaction energies of the particles on the sites related to the potential of mean force in an inhomogeneous fluid. It was shown that the first layer of a fluid at contact with solid can exhibit an order-disorder phase transition which can be interpreted as cooperative adsorption. Later this effect was investigated in more detail by Lesser together with Huckaby [73–75] and it was used by them for interpretation of different phenomena at the interface electrode-electrolyte solutions [76–79].

During the final decade of the last century Lesser was a regular summer visitor at the Universite P. et M. Curie in Paris. Strong collaboration with the laboratory of P. Turq opened the possibility of applying the MSA approach to describe transport properties of electrolyte solutions [80–83]. Around this time Lesser, together with his coworkers, generalized the results of the MSA for ionic fluids for the presence of ionic associations. Towards this aim, within the framework of the Wertheim-Ornstein-Zernike integral equation theory [84,85], the associative mean spherical approximation (AMSA) [86] and the binding mean spherical approximation (BIMSA) [87] were formulated. These approaches are practically identical. The results for ionic fluids that included ionic dimerization [88], were generalized to encompass more complex ionic associations such as the formation of ionic chains [89], networks [90], polyelectrolytes [91], and highly asymmetric ionic fluids [92]. Again it was shown that the AMSA solution for ionic system with different types of associations can be given in the terms of a single screening parameter  $\Gamma_B$ , which plays the same role as the parameter  $\Gamma$  in the MSA theory for simple electrolytes. With his French colleagues Lesser used the MSA and the AMSA results for the description of thermodynamic properties of electrolyte solutions [93–95]. An interpolation scheme as a combination of the MSA and the AMSA was proposed for ionic fluids. It was shown that such scheme reproduces satisfactorily computer simulation data for the critical point in ionic fluids [96,97]. In Paris, Lesser collaborated successfully with the theoretical group of B. Jancovici from Orsay Universite. This collaboration led to some interesting exact results for one and two dimensional coulombic systems [98–100].

Lesser was the one of the leaders of modern liquid matter theory. He collaborated and had joint publications with other leaders such as H.L. Friedman, K. Gubbins, D. Henderson, J.L. Lebowitz, G. Stell, J.M. Prausnitz, M. Wertheim and others. Lesser also developed close connection with experimentalists. For example, he collaborated with such known specialists in neutron scattering as A.H. Narten. They used the MSA for the description of the structure of liquid metals [101]. From neutron diffraction they extracted atom pair distribution functions of liquid water [102]. He also collaborated with a known specialist in electrochemistry, W.R. Fawcett, and many others.

We should note that the analytical solution of MSA for different models that Lesser treated is not so simple. It involves complex and tedious algebra but the final results are usually very clear. But with his insightful imagination Lesser knew the results intuitively from the beginning and the complex mathematics was only a means to that end.

MH knew Lesser from his first papers about the MSA for the ion-dipole model. He reproduced these results and then tried to generalize this for size-asymmetric ion-dipole systems, but with Lesser it was impossible to be in competition and later MH collaborated with Lesser on the AMSA solution for different models of ionic fluids. MH met Lesser personally for the first time at a conference in Asilomar, California, in 1990, and later at other conferences and during their mutual visits to Paris. MH found Lesser to be very attractive and intelligent personality. He was equally fluent in English, French, Spanish and German. He could also speak Italian and Portuguese.

OB was doing his PhD thesis in Paris when he met Lesser during one of his visits to the laboratory of P. Turq. At first OB did not know MSA and HNC theories. Lesser was presenting his work on sticky electrolytes – another curiosity at the time. Lesser's suggestion prompted OB to apply simply the distribution functions given by MSA to the description of transport properties of electrolyte solutions.

Later, this collaboration was continued with the introduction of the MSA approach in the framework of the Wertheim-Ornstein-Zernike integral equations to describe the ionic dimerization and the formation of charged chains. Lesser invited OB to visit him in Puerto Rico which the latter did in 2002. Lesser was a very welcoming host and this visit generated stimulating scientific discussions. We also keep the memory of pleasant scientific meetings with him, especially during CECAM workshops in Lyons, France. The last time we saw Lesser in Paris was in May 2011. He continued his research enthusiastically despite health issues.

LBB began his career at the UPR as Lesser's post-doc in the early 1980's and was greatly impressed by Lesser's unflinching devotion to science, an infectious enthusiasm for research, his tireless hard-working nature, and phenomenal output. All this, coupled with an amiable, friendly disposition made Lesser a role model at the Department of Physics and the Natural Sciences Faculty.

DH first met Lesser at one of Joel Lebowitz's Statistical Mechanics meeting in 1967 and again at a meeting in Mexico City in 1975. At the Mexico City meeting, Lesser invited DH to visit UPR, which he did in 1976. This was the first of several visits. Lesser was always a stimulating colleague and a hospitable host. Many pleasant weekends were spent at Dorado Beach and other parts of the island.

The last time DH saw Lesser was at a meeting in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in 2003. Lesser, Yurko Duda, and DH had lunch together at the end of the meeting. On this occasion, Lesser forecast that he and DH would live about ten years more and die at about the age of 80. Surprisingly, it was Yurko, who was much younger, who died first. However, Lesser was quite accurate about himself. He passed away in New Jersey at the age of 82 on April 24, 2016, surrounded by his family. He is missed, personally and scientifically.

This special issue contains articles by collaborators, former students, and friends of Lesser. The contents can be separated approximately into three parts. The first one is connected with the studies of the bulk properties of liquids and solutions [103–117]. The second part is devoted to investigations of surface properties of liquids and solutions [118–126]. The third part includes some biological aspects [127–131]. Nine papers [103–111] are connected with the development and applications of MSA and AMSA approaches, one of the favorite topics of Lesser. In particular Kalyuzhnyi, Reščič, Holovko, and Cummings [103] developed the AMSA theory for several versions of primitive models of room temperature ionic liquids modeled as two-component mixture of hard-sphere anions and linear chain cations represented by tangentially bonded hard spheres with the charge located on one of the terminal bonds. The theory reduces to solving one nonlinear algebraic equation for the screening parameter  $\Gamma$  and was applied to the description of vapour-liquid phase coexistence. Bernard and Simonin [104] have proposed the AMSA approach for polyelectrolytes considering polyelectrolytic chain formation and associations of counterions on the chains. The expressions for the screening parameters the internal and free energy are established. Herrera [105] has discussed the thermodynamics and structural properties of hard-sphere fluids with multi-Yukawa interactions obtained from the MSA approach. Villard, Bernard and Dufrière [106] have used the MSA solution for the study the problem of specificity in aqueous electrolyte solutions which is taken into account by association term similar to that in the Bjerrum theory. The activity coefficients obtained are used for the description of pure electrolytes and electrolyte mixtures up to molar concentrations. Luksic, Slejko, and Hribar-Lee [107] used a primitive ionic model in mixture with uncharged hard spheres for the modeling of the influence of the poly(ethylene glycol) on the mean activity coefficients of NaCl aqueous solutions. It was shown that MSA theory for such simple model can be successfully used for the interpretation of experimental data. Holovko and Protsykevich [108] have analysed the analytical solution of AMSA for ion-dipole model and discussed the possibility of using this result for electrolyte solutions. Using the MSA solution for dipolar mixture Bandura, Holovko, and Lvov [109] have derived a new analytical expression for the solvation energy of dipolar molecules in

polar solvents which generalizes the Kirkwood classical expression obtained in the framework of dielectric continuum model. This result together with corresponding generalization of Born classical expression for solvation energy of ions in polar solvents obtained from MSA solutions for ion-dipole mixture, were applied by Lvov, Hall, Bandura, and Gamwo [110] in the description of standard molar Gibbs energies of ions and ionic pairs in aqueous solutions above and below the critical point of water. Janc, Vlachy, and Luksic [111] present the calorimetric studies of the enthalpy of mixing of bovine serum albumin in water at different pH with several low molecular weight salts. The MSA was used to estimate the Coulomb effects upon mixing.

Different aspects of bulk properties of liquids and solutions are considered also in papers [112–117]. In particular, in the paper of Rouha, Nezbeda, Hruby, and Moucka [112] the second, third and fourth virial coefficients for the non-polarizable TiP4P/2005 model of water and the polarizable BK3 model are presented and compared with available experimental and pseudo-experimental data. Urbic [113] has studied the structural and thermodynamic properties of two-dimensional fluids with one site associating point by the site-site integral equation theory, the Wertheim's thermodynamics perturbation theory and the Wertheim's integral equation theory for associative fluids. The accuracy of the theories were checked by comparing with the corresponding Monte Carlo results. Patsahan (O), Patashan (T), and Holovko [114] have studied the influence of charge and size asymmetry of ions on vapour-liquid phase transition of ionic fluids in disordered porous media by combine the collective variables and scaled particle theories and the replica method. Høye and Lomba [115] return to investigation of critical properties in framework of the hierarchical reference theory and discuss connection with the self-consistent Ornstein-Zernike approximation. Raineri, Wise, and Ben-Amotz [116] have presented a new statistical-mechanical approach for studying the energetics of solvent restructuring in solvation processes where only the interactions between the solute and solvent molecules change. Vericat, Carlevano, Stoico and Renzi [117] have developed a theory for physical clusters bonded in clusters along a finite time, so-called residence time.

Seven papers [118–124] from the second part of this issue are connected with different aspects of electrical double layer theory, one of Lesser's enduring research interests spanning over three decades. In particular Ciach [118] presents the simple theory for oscillatory charge profile in ionic liquids near a charged wall in the framework of mesoscopic field theory for ionic systems. By using coarse-grained models and the density theory, Neal, Wesolowski, Henderson, and Wu [119] have investigated the distribution of ions among idealized nanopores in contact with an asymmetric ionic liquid mixture and the effects of the bulk electrolyte composition on the capacitive energy storage. In [120] Patra resorts to density functional theory and Monte Carlo simulations in order to study the effect of multivalent counterions on the spherical electrical double layers with size and charge asymmetric mixed electrolytes. Gonzalez-Tovar, Lozada-Cassou, Bhuiyan, and Outhwaite [121] have studied the zeta potential and structure of a model cylindrical double layer by Poisson-Boltzmann theory, hypernetted chain/mean spherical approximation, the modified Poisson-Boltzmann theory, and the density functional theory. The results are compared with the corresponding Monte Carlo simulations data. In [122] Lee, Ramos(FS), and Ramos(AM) resort to a density functional theory based on the third-order Ornstein-Zernike relation in order to study the adsorption of mixtures of the Yukawa ions near a hard wall. Satisfactory agreements are obtained with corresponded computer simulation results. Spada, Gavryushov and Bohinc [123] have, in framework of a modified Poisson-Boltzmann theory, have investigated the mechanism of attractive interaction between two like-charged surfaces embedded in an electrolyte composed of positively and negatively charged spherical nonparticles. Bokum, di Caprio, Holovko, and Vikhrenko [124] have studied the influence of vacancies on the charge screening of mobile ions in lattice models. It is shown that the value of

square of inverse Debye-Huckel length is proportional to the product of the concentration of mobile ions and the concentration of vacancies. It is further shown that inclusion of the entropy term connected with vacancies leads to a Fermi-Dirac-like charge distribution at a plain boundary. The influence of the variation of the crystal field near the boundary on the structure and electro-physical characteristics of a double layer are discussed. Boróvko, Ryzsko, Sokolowski, and Pizio [125] have considered molecular dynamics and density functional study of the structure of hairy particles at a hard wall. Druchok and Luksic [126] present the molecular dynamics investigation of concept of nanocarries based on carbo-cylated nanotubes with anionic functional groups and tetra-alkyl-ammonium cations acting as corks.

And finally five other papers [127–131] have some biological aspects. Eisenberg [127] has formulated general biological questions to physical systems needed for understanding of fundamental biological problems. Hirata [128] has proposed a theory to analyse the elastic incoherent neutron scattering data of aqueous solutions of protein, based on the generalized Langevin theory combined with the 3D-RISM/RISM equation. In the framework of this theory, the abrupt change of the gradient of the mean square displacement of protein versus the temperature is interpreted as an onset of “solvent-induced elasticity” with increasing temperature. Zhang, Xu, Xiong, Peng, Kumari, and Wei [129] have presented molecular dynamic simulations showing why calcium ions cause membrane defects and water leakage. Kastelic, Dill, Kalyuzhnyi, and Vlachy [130] have modified Wertheim’s theory of associating fluid to model antibody solutions, specifically to study qualitative relations between the structure and interactions of antibodies and the viscosity of solution. Molecular dynamics simulations were used to investigate the dissolution of aspirin nanocrystals in water in the paper of Anand and Patey [131].

We express our gratitude to all of the contributors of this special issue.

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