



The twenty-eighth Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences was held in the Casina Pio IV in the Vatican from 27-30 October 1992. The theme indicated by the Council on the proposal of its President, Professor Marini-Bettòlo: “The Emergence of Complexity in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology”, was well chosen for its importance in the present scientific context, its multidisciplinary aspect and its philosophical and religious implications. It corresponds in scope to the vocation of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, which is to “promote the progress of science and the study of epistemological problems relating to it... and which can contribute to the deepening of moral, social and spiritual questions” (Articles 2 and 3 of the Statute).

Order and disorder, chaos and organisation, diversity and classification, chance and necessity, origin (of the world, of life, of death) and evolution, entropy and anthropy, fullness and emptiness (the fullness of emptiness and the emptiness of fullness), telonomics and teleology, reductionism and holism, are some of the concepts that constitute the many facets of the problem of the emergence of complexity, around which bold and lively discussions have been organised.