

- to esperimento della *memoria molecolare* conservata dall'acqua dopo diluizioni estreme (... *unknown nature of the molecular signal... cannot be because we cannot understand it*: BENVENISTE J., Lettera di commento, *Lancet* 1998; 351:367); ii, d'altro lato, il commento al principio delle diluizioni: VALLANCE A.K., JOBST K.A., *Lancet* 1998; 351:366 (anche in: VALLANCE A.K., *Can biological activity be maintained at ultra-high dilution? An overview of homeopathy, evidence and Bayesian philosophy*. *J. Altern. Complement. Med.* 1998; 4:49-76). Il rilievo epistemologico di Benveniste non implica tuttavia che la sua affermazione (l'acqua conserva la memoria dei soluti dopo diluizioni estreme) sia vera (in assenza di conferme sperimentali mai intervenute da parte di altri laboratori), né fa divenire reali gli effetti terapeutici delle pratiche omeopatiche in mancanza di un effetto dimostrato con procedura sperimentale clinica (così infatti correttamente commentano Klaus Linde e Wayne B. Jonas, *Lancet* 1998; 351: 367-368). Va rilevato che, delle medicine cosiddette alternative, solo l'agopuntura ha ricevuto una validazione ufficiale da parte della U.S. Food and Drug Administration (1997). Sulla distinzione, pretesa o reale, tra canoni epistemologici della biomedicina e delle scienze naturali, nonché tra *impredittibilità* dei risultati di un'azione medica, progressivamente riducibile nella medicina scientifica, ed invece sostanzialmente non riducibile nelle medicine *alternative*, che considerano variabilità individuale ed *impredittibilità* come intrinseche alla medicina, si veda: AZZONE G.F., *La predicibilità della medicina scientifica*. *Med. Secoli* 1997; 9:39-57. Va infine ricordato che riguardo ai *medicinali omeopatici* vi sono direttive europee vigenti (65/65/CEE, 75/319/CEE e 92/73/CEE) e proposte di ampliamento del loro campo di applicazione (Risoluzione Parlamento europeo, sessione maggio 1997).
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 30. BERG P., BALTIMORE D., BRENNER S., ROBLIN R.O., SINGER M.F., *Summary statement of the Asilomar conference on recombinant DNA molecules*. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Science U.S.A.* 1975; 72:1981-1984; *idem*, *Science* 1975; 188:991-994.
 31. VEGETTI FINZI S., *Volere un figlio. La nuova maternità fra natura e scienza*. Mondadori, Milano, 1997 (commento a cura di Serena Zoli su *Corriere della Sera* 1 febbraio 1998, p. 25).

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COMMEMORATION OF A.M. PAZZINI ON THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH

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To recall A. Pazzini on the centenary of his birth and in the same lecture hall where he started his university teaching career is a cause of profound emotion for me.

Born in Rome on 23 February 1898 of Norberto Pazzini, a well-known artist of the current of the so-called *macchiaioli* and Giannina Brandimarte, Pazzini completed his studies in Rome and graduated in medicine on 12 July 1922, presenting an experimental thesis prepared at the Institute of Human Physiology directed at that time by Prof. Silvestro baglioni.

For the first years after graduation, he worked as a physician in the Military Health Service, first as an assistant at the Institute of Pharmacology and then in the Ospedali Riuniti, both in Rome.

His natural inclination for history found its full realization in the field of the history of Medicine. It was while he was working at the Santo Spirito Hospital, Rome, which housed a medical history Museum supervised by Prof. Pietro Capparoni, that Pazzini started to devote himself to the study of the historical development of medical thought. As a student, he had compiled a literary - historical volume which was published in 1926 with the title *Alcoholism and medicine*, with a preface by Mengazzini, which was followed by another volume written in Latin and published in 1930 entitled *De medica preparatione maleficarum, sive Practica medica*.

His great interest in the study of history is apparent in the numerous articles which were published in various Italian and foreign journals, in particular the *Bollettino* of the Historical Institute of Healing Arts, of which he was chief editor. After taking the Libera Docenza in the History of Medicine in 1931, he devoted increasingly more time to the historical - scientific issues suggested by current developments in medicine. In 1933 Pazzini held a lecture at the Free Course in the History of Medicine, treating the Apology of the History of Medicine, in the Lecture Hall of the Institute of Hygiene, where he continued to teach afterwards on his nomination as a teaching fellow. I met him dur-

ing these university courses and started to work together with him at the Buon Pastore Military Hospital in Rome, where he was Head of Department with the rank of medical captain and I was his assistant with the rank of sublieutenant. Thus it was that he took me on as a collaborator at his University Chair. Right from the first year when he officially took office (1936-37), he began to conceive the ambitious project of devoting to his subject a separate institute with a library and museum, making it thus into a centre of research as well as teaching.

In the basement of the present - day Institute of Hygiene he began collecting books, bibliographies, photographs, objects connected with the History of Medicine, and furniture, all of which were his personal possessions and which he donated to the University. He then transformed the premises into a first nucleus of the future Institute of the History of Medicine, to be built on a site within the main university campus and already established in the building plans of what was known at the time as Studium Urbis, now the Città Universitaria of *La Sapienza* University. In 1953 the first stone was laid for the new Institute and, one stone after another, the building was finished the following year. On 13 September, 1954, the new Institute, containing the Museum, the Library and the various collections of iconography, autographs, documentary films and slides, archives and so on, received the participants in the XIV International Congress of the History of Medicine, and in its walls were housed the imposing collection of books put together by Pazzini (over 40.000 volumes, including 2.000 of the sixteenth century) and the vast collection of museum exhibits further enriched by the collection of the opera singer Evan Gorga and by over 650 objects which he himself donated.

Pazzini's artistic and literary temperament, his versatile talents are revealed in the Institute which he founded and which carries the indelible personal stamp of the man who was the first to dream of and realise this admirable institution.

Pazzini's didactic and scientific activity may be dated between 1939, with the publication of his first volume entitled *Il pensiero medico nei secoli*, and 1974, when he published in two large volumes his *History of the Arts of healing*.

Pazzini maintained that basic roots usually spring from a fact,

but the fact in its intimate significance means the expression of ideas, and the expression of ideas means the expression of a philosophy, ever bearing in mind the relativity of the historical period with its technical assets, its psychology, ethics and religion.

As Director of the Institute and of the School of Specialization, he encouraged his students to undertake group research which led to the publication of work carried out by the school, among which biomedical research on the furthest era of classical Greece and Rome, to autograph manuscript studies of the Scuola Salernitana, down to those of the Anatomia Leonardiana.

Last but not least, is the postumous work on Morgagni's *Lezioni Teoriche*, edited in a large quarto volumes.

Amongst his academic activities I wish also to recall his seminars, during which the research and studies of single students were illustrated, often part of the most up-to-date developments in the field of historical scientific thought in the biomedical sphere.

Finally, he is to be remembered as a man of strong family affections, an artist who derived enormous pleasure and also an inner torment from music, which he listened to in every free moment of his life.

Pazzini was a many-sided genius who left his mark on Italian History of Medicine and the Institute with its rich library and Museum is his legacy.