

**BOOK REVIEW**

# L'ematologia in Italia

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It is more than three decades since the British Journal of Haematology published a review of a book in a language other than English. Given the increasing globalisation of haematology, it seems appropriate that this should occur again. This extensively illustrated book will be of interest to Italians at home and abroad, and also to non-Italians with a particular interest in Italian haematology and perhaps to others as Italian haematology has had a central role in the development of our specialty.

The book is nearly 600 pages in length, which is testimony to the dedication of Giovanni Pizzolo to the project. The main text is introduced with a historical account of the origins of Italian haematology by Carlo Balduini, set in a European context. The role of Giulio Bizzozero (1846–1901) in demonstrating in 1869, by microscopy, that the bone marrow was the seat of haemopoiesis is first highlighted. Bizzozero described bone marrow erythroblasts, phagocytic cells and megakaryocytes (the latter known for some times as 'giant marrow cells of Bizzozero'). Subsequently, in 1882, he described the role of platelets (*piastri*) in coagulation. There follows a detailed discussion of the career of Adolfo Ferrata (1880–1946) in Parma, Berlin, Naples, Messina and Pavia. Ferrata, who is seen as one of the founding fathers of Italian haematology, was both a physician and a researcher. He proposed the origin of haemopoietic cells from a common precursor, published significant textbooks and, together with Carlo Moreschi

(1876–1921), established the journal *Haematologica*. Ferrata was also instrumental, along with Giovanni di Guglielmo (1896–1961; not '1991' as the book has it!), in establishing in 1935 *La Società Italiana di Ematologia* (SIE). The rest of the introductory chapter deals with the later history of haematology in Pavia, including the description of erythroleukaemia by di Guglielmo.

Other early chapters include an interview with Sante Tura on the development of Italian haematology as an autonomous discipline, between 1965 and 1976 and the history not only of SIE but also of *La Società Italiana di Ematologia Sperimentale* (SIES) and the *Gruppo Italiano per il Trapianto di Midollo Osseo, Cellule Staminali Emopoietiche e Terapia Cellulare* (GITMO). The next 400 pages offer a very detailed and well-illustrated account of the development of haematology in 19 regions of Italy. The book concludes with a gallery of photographs.

This text is a valuable historical record. It is to be hoped that haematologists in other countries will emulate it and provide a permanent record of the development of our specialty in individual countries.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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