

CLINICAL HEMORHEOLOGY, Vol. 6, pp. 113-121, 1986  
0271-5198/86 \$3.00 + .00 Printed in the USA.  
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FOURTH EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON CLINICAL HEMORHEOLOGY

WELCOME ADDRESS

Tullio Di Perri, President

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues, Participants of this Meeting.

On behalf of the Italian Society of Haemorheology, and of the Scientific and Organizing Committees, I have the pleasure and the honour to welcome everybody to the Fourth European Conference on Clinical Haemorheology.

The fact that after Nancy, London and Baden-Baden, the International Advisory Committee and the European Clinical Haemorheological Coordinating Committee chose our town for the actual Conference, considered by us as a sign of appreciation, may be undeserved of the enthusiastic activity carried out by our Society in the hemorheological field. Personally, I interpreted it also as a sign of friendship, which we intend to return, giving our maximum care to the organization of this Conference.

I wish to recall that the choice of Siena as conference town, open to people coming from all corners of the world, is in perfect agreement with its secular tradition of hospitality.

As you have perhaps seen, the entrance into the town is allowed only through the gates which interrupt the continuity of the external town walls. Each gate is connected with the main access roads, either coming from Arezzo and Grosseto or coming from Firenze and Roma along the old Roman road, the so-called Via Cassia, the Cassia Road. For many geographical and historical reasons, the road coming from Firenze was the main access to the town, since it was the extension of the road coming from abroad and going to Roma. It was the road used in the Middle Ages by Catholic pilgrims, known as Via Francigena, the French Road, so called perhaps because most pilgrims were entering in Italy from the French border. Well, arriving from Firenze along this road, you can see firstly a gate-

like structure, actually not connected with the walls, which lies half a mile before the true gate which is named Porta Camollia, Camollia Gate. If you direct your attention to the gable of the Camollia Gate along the whole lintel, you can read this Latin sentence COR MAGIS TIBI SENA PANDIT. In its most simple interpretation it means: Siena completely opens her heart to you. The more correct translation is: Siena is opening her heart more than this gate. It was the welcoming for everybody coming inside the town



Fig. 1 Porta Camollia, Siena

and particularly for the pilgrims. However, I think that we can appropriate this sentence to pay homage both to our guests in such a very particular scientific occasion and to our town, underlying a sort of continuity in its secular spirit of hospitality. I would like to remember this first rate role, played by our University and its School of Medicine in the development of such a characterization of the people of Siena. Therefore, once more today, I do repeat this old sentence to express a welcome with the old and still new words.

Now a few words about the Conference. Every student of blood circulation is aware that many advances are happening in this field. Those who are involved have sensed it for ten to fifteen years since the study of the intrinsic friction of the blood was introduced in the clinical practice, even in an atypical way. Everybody remembers how the role played by rheological factors in circulation of the blood comes from very far in our scientific memory. However, only recently a line of clinical investigation was started after reaching the possibility to measure *ex vivo* in quantitative terms the single blood viscosity factors. But it is well known, how difficult it is to convert the *ex vivo* findings to the *in vivo* truth. The extrapolation of such findings could appear easy in a congregation of true believers as sometimes we think we are, but it is much harder among those unconverted. We refused, on principle, to belong either to the first or to the second category, but, in reality, I think that we are a little unbalanced being closer to the believers than to the unconverted. This awareness of fight is consequent to the fact that we are interested in this matter and this is one, may be of most importance, of the reasons for being all together here today.

Now a few words on the general organization of the Conference. As it was made known, the Lectures and the Round Tables will be held in plenary sessions. The negative consequence of such a choice was the reduction of the arguments to be discussed. The reverse of the medal, the positive consequence, at least in our hope, was to assure the general presence to all sessions extending the possibility of discussion and criticism. Regarding the oral communications and the poster sessions, it was convenient to divide each session into three contemporary subsessions due to the large

number of accepted abstracts. Both the Fåhraeus Medal Award and the conclusive reports from Satellite Symposia will be presented in plenary sessions. In the evening, we programmed two social events to have the opportunity to enjoy being once more all together. For the practical logistic problems, except the weather, the entire Scientific and Organizing Committees and myself will cover any need you may have.

Moreover, I hope to have been able to express to you my pleasure to welcome you in Siena today. Anyway, I wish you a pleasant time during the scientific and social events. But, before concluding, I wish also to thank the Scientific Committee and especially Professor Forconi, Doctor Rossi and Doctor Cappelli and the Organizing Committee, and especially Mr. Merolli and Mrs. Trefollini for their excellent and clever work.

Now I will ask first the Dean and then the Rector to say something for concluding this Opening Ceremony.