

## FOREWORD

When, in the early fifties, my « Study of Twins » was published, it included a chapter of 56 pages devoted to multiple pregnancy, that I had written with the main aim to awaken the interest of obstetricians in the subject.

The present volume, containing the proceedings of an International Symposium on Multiple Pregnancy held in Warsaw in October 1972, and in which numerous gynecologists, obstetricians, and pediatricians, devote a large number of papers to the obstetrical and neonatal problems of twins, clearly shows that this subject has now become of interest to the different professional classes: the more so, if one considers that almost all papers come from clinics and institutes of few Eastern European countries.

Important obstetrical-gynecological problems are dealt with, such as: multiple pregnancy as a high-risk pregnancy and its early diagnosis; maternal feeding; prematurity, low birth weight, and measures to prevent the usual shortening of multiple-pregnancy duration; birth order and the specific problems for the second fetus; labor anticipation, shortening of labor duration; dystrophies, malformations, stillbirths, and perinatal mortality.

On the other hand, neonatologists and pediatricians extensively report on the postnatal development of the children from multiple pregnancies in their first days and years of life.

Two very interesting sections follow, respectively devoted to the long-term observation of two cases of quadruplets and to extensive examination of the Gdansk (Danzig) famous quintuplets.

The final part of the volume is devoted to various aspects of the twinning phenomenon (hormones and causal factors, demography, methods of study, etc.). This is especially valuable, for it establishes a bridge between the obstetric and pediatric areas of interest, and the field of general, medical, and clinical genetics, thus showing that twin studies are a « continuum » where all subjects are interrelated.

The general interest of the study of twins, the need of becoming aware, analytically and unitarily at the same time, of what twins represent, both as such and for the contribution they may give to scientific progress, is the reason why the Gregor Mendel Institute was established in Rome in 1953, and the reason why the publication of the international quarterly, « Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae, » was started in 1952 while the institute was still being built.

I am therefore very happy to have this volume included in our serial publications, especially at a time when our institute is promoting and organizing, with the same spirit of scientific endeavor and cooperation, the First International Congress of Twin Studies.

Twin studies are rich of suggestions and developments, up to the point of recently calling our attention to the hereditary aspects of biological time, and thus promoting the development of the new branch of Chronogenetics.

This is also clearly present in this volume, especially when one considers, for instance, the chronogenetic significance of the growth dynamics in the monozygotic quadruplets of Wroclaw as compared to the pentazygotic quintuplets of Gdansk.

In conclusion, it seems to me that the publication of the present volume represents a successful result, an example of international cooperation, and I should like to express my gratefulness to those who made it possible to bring this about: our Warsaw colleagues, first, and especially Professors Krystyna Bozkowa and Stefan Soszka, the Symposium Organizing and Scientific Committees they chaired, and their Secretary, Dr. Halina Tomaszewska; Professor Paolo Parisi, then, the careful and passionate editor of this volume; and, last but not least, all different authors, the individual contributions of whom have made up the present proceedings.

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From the Mendel Institute in its Twentieth Anniversary