

FOREWORD

I am particularly pleased to present this volume of Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae that is devoted to the Proceedings of the First International Congress on Twin Studies, since this publication, so carefully edited by Professor Parisi, closes the first cycle of a series of initiatives related to the promotion of the scientific study of twins at an international level.

This cycle was opened in 1951, as I published a book on twins covering a total of 5230 references i.e., practically the entire literature, since Galton's paper in 1876, over a period of 75 years. Then, in 1952, the foundation of this international journal followed, which, in its title, presented the study of twins as a branch of medical genetics. In its 25 volumes now, Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae has published articles on twin studies by 741 authors from the various parts of the world and in different languages.

The cycle continued with the foundation, in 1953, of the Gregor Mendel Institute of Medical Genetics and Twin Studies, which has so far directly examined 14,641 twin pairs, whose clinical records are frequently consulted by researchers from all over the world.

We then engaged in a continued effort toward the international promotion of twin studies, and eventually sponsored and organized an International Symposium. This took place in Rome on 4-7 September 1969 and was attended by over 100 researchers from 18 countries. The Proceedings were then published in volume 19 of our journal.

The initiative was successful, and similar ones followed, such as the Warsaw International Symposium on Multiple Pregnancy in 1972 (the Proceedings of which also appeared on volume 22 of our journal) and other international meetings. The times thus appeared to be ripe as we eventually decided to organize the First International Congress on Twin Studies and thus set the stage for a more regular development and promotion of our discipline. The Congress took place in Rome on 28 October through 2 November 1974 and was attended by about 200 researchers from 27 countries. As a logical outcome of it, the International Society for Twin Studies has been established.

Five steps have thus characterized what we might call the « Roman Promotional Cycle » and we now look forward to its successful continuation with the forthcoming Second International Congress on Twin Studies to be held in Washington at the end of August of 1977.

The Roman Cycle finds its cultural background and justification in Rome's mythological — but no less stimulating — heritage as a town founded by twins. Somewhat similarly to ancient Rome, which built its consular roads, towards the North (via Aurelia and via Cassia), the East (via Salaria), and the South (via Appia), modern Rome has tried to open wider ways for the scientific knowledge of twins worldwide.

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