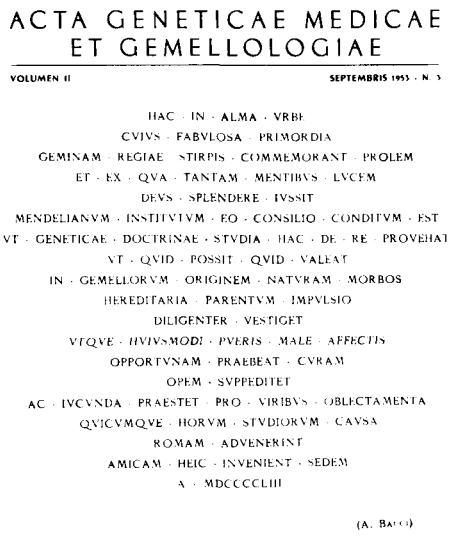
Acta Genet Med Gemellol 28:1–2 (1979)
The Mendel Institute / Alan R. Liss, Inc.

Editorial

Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae: Twin Research


ACTA GENETICAE MEDICAE
ET GEMELLOLOGIAE

VOLUMEN II SEPTEMBRIS 1953 · N. 3

HAC · IN · ALMA · VRBE
CVIVS · FABVLOSA · PRIMORDIA
GEMINAM · REGIAE · STIRPIS · COMMEMORANT · PROLEM
ET · EX · QVA · TANTAM · MENTIBVS · LVCEM
DEVS · SPLENDERE · IVSSIT
MENDELIANVM · INSTITVTVM · EO · CONSILIO · CONDITVM · EST
VT · GENETICAE · DOCTRINAE · STVDIA · HAC · DE · RE · PROVEHAT
VT · QVID · POSSIT · QVID · VALEAT
IN · GEMELLORVM · ORIGINEM · NATVRAM · MORBOS
HEREDITARIA · PARENTVM · IMPVLSIO
DILIGENTER · VESTIGET
VTQVE · HVIVSMODI · PVERIS · MALE · AFFECTIS
OPPORTVNAM · PRAEBEAT · CVRAM
OPEM · SVPPEDITET
AC · IVCVNDA · PRAESTET · PRO · VIRIBVS · OBLECTAMENTA
QVICVMQVE · HORVM · STVDIORVM · CAVSA
ROMAM · ADVENERINT
AMICAM · HEIC · INVENIENT · SEDEM
A · MDCCCCLIII

(A. Bacci)

When the Gregor Mendel Institute of Medical Genetics and Twin Research was opened in Rome in 1953, a Latin epigraph commemorating the event and its bearing for twins and twin research appeared on the first page of our journal's sixth issue – its first issue already having been published in January 1952, in turn preceded by the publication of "Studio dei Gemelli" [1951].

At that time, medical genetics as a university discipline did not exist in Italy and was barely taking its first steps in the U.S., in Japan, and in a few European countries. As for twins, they frequently represented little more than a curiosity, and twin research, though fairly developed in certain areas, was comparatively isolated and apparently coming to a deadlock.

In the past quarter of a century, largely in the wake of the dramatic developments of fundamental genetics, and much in the same way as the latter came to permeate all areas of biology, medical genetics has expanded to such a point, and become so closely integrated into every biological discipline, that no branch of medical science can now do without a genetic perspective or the results of genetic analysis.

Twin research, in turn, has revealed itself to be not an island, but a still largely unexplored continent, to which scientific missions from a variety of areas – not only genetics and medicine, but also psychology, biology, anthropology, human studies – are increasingly directed. Because of the profound insights they offer, as originally discovered by mythology and art, twins allow man to understand himself better, as in a mirror, and to disentangle the complex aspects of his nature, of his individuality.

Twins have also made a fundamental contribution to the development of a new area of research, chronogenetics. This is the study of biological time (not to be confused with chronobiology, which studies biological effects of physical times) and of its inheritance: It postulates the existence of a temporal dimension of the gene, whereby genetic traits or conditions may be characterized by variable times (of onset, of decline) and life-spans that are, in turn, under genetic control, as both family and twin studies indicate.

Although twins are important on their own, both because of their specific hazards at the obstetric, pediatric and psychological level, as well as because of the relevance of the

0001-5660/79/2801-0001$00.80

twinning phenomenon for various areas of biology and psychology, twin research has essentially developed as a method in human genetics. Because the assumptions underlying this method have in the past not always been correctly or entirely considered nor tested, critical revisions have gradually developed. In this process, new models have been offered, and twin research has eventually come to represent an even more powerful approach in an increasingly large variety of disciplines. The extent of this process has been such that a specific and fundamental area of research has come into being, twin research methodology (the study of the study of twins), the importance of which is reflected in part by the contents of the present issue.

It is in order to better promote and coordinate these and other activities that the International Society for Twin Studies was founded in Rome in 1974. Two successful congresses (Rome 1974 and Washington 1977) and a third one on the way (Jerusalem 1980), together with an active and increasing membership and a number of working groups in some critical areas, are, among other things, proof that twin research is enjoying perfect health and is moving toward future developments and achievements.

Our journal will now endeavor to serve these purposes in the best possible way. Whereas quite a few journals of medical genetics have come into existence since its foundation, ours is still the only journal specifically devoted to twin research. Although medical genetics and twin research remain closely connected fields, this circumstance and the developments described above will be reflected in our future issues.

Starting in 1979, the Mendel Institute's journal, Acta Geneticae Medicae et Gemellologiae, will function as the official publication of the International Society for Twin Studies. A subtitle, Twin Research, will better define its principal field of interest. It will be published quarterly, in a new, more modern and practical format, and will be distributed worldwide by Alan R. Liss, Inc., New York. The journal's revised Board of Editors includes a geographically representative group of world authorities in the various areas of twin research. Manuscripts received will be reviewed, and if approved will be published with the maximum possible speed. The editorial board intends to maintain strict standards of scientific excellence.

The friendly collaboration of the members of our previous Advisory Board and the support of many friends and colleagues – members of the new board and nonmembers alike – who have helped us bring about these new developments, are most gratefully acknowledged.

Continued support and collaboration will indeed be essential for our journal to fulfill its function and for twin research to prosper as we all wish. Thank you, and goodbye until Jerusalem.

Luigi Gedda
From The Mendel Institute
January 1979