

Biochemistry at the University of Camerino
by Mauro Angeletti *

Biochemistry in Camerino was officially born in the late 50s - early 60s at the Faculty of Pharmacy, then chaired by prof. Guido Giacomo Tedeschi, but already in the academic year 1952-53 the University calls Prof. Alessandro Gazzarrini as professor in charge of Biological Chemistry for the Faculties of Pharmacy and Natural Sciences.

In the academic year 1955-56, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, professors Alfredo Ruffo (until 16/01/1956) and Noris Siliprandi (from 1/2/1956) were tenured in Biological Chemistry.

In the academic year 1957-58, the institute of general physiology and biological chemistry was founded at the Faculty of Pharmacy, and Prof. Noris Siliprandi was appointed director.

In that period the research group coordinated by Prof. Siliprandi was interested in specific metabolic aspects of cellular respiration (ref.1).

From 1961-62 Paolo Cerletti was called (he too, like Prof. Siliprandi, a student of Prof. Alessandro Rossi Fanelli) as Professor in charge of Biological Chemistry.

Prof. Cerletti begins in Camerino a field of research on flavin prosthetic groups of succinate dehydrogenase which he will develop during his career (ref.2).

Prof. Cerletti took office as professor of biological chemistry on 12/15/65 and will become director of the institute of biological chemistry from the academic year 1965-66 (the year of its foundation as an institute with this denomination) and until 1967.

Until 12/10/68, Prof. Eraldo Antonini was director of the institute of biological chemistry.

Prof. Antonini will deal in Camerino with the structural and functional properties of hemoglobins (ref. 3), a research topic that will become the first of the characterizing pillars of Biochemistry in Camerino (ref. 5-9). Prof. Antonini will also give impetus to research on the functional and structural characterization of serine proteases and their protein inhibitors (ref.15). This area, which will develop by deepening the role of the proteasome in neurodegenerative diseases (ref.16-18), remains today the second pillar of biochemical research at the University of Camerino.

Since 12/11/68 Prof. Moret has been director (who will take up his role as full professor from 11/17/70) and throughout the academic year. 1969-70 (ref.4).

From 11/1/70 Pier Luigi Ipata was called as full professor of Biological Chemistry always in the Faculty of Pharmacy, then also elected Rector of the University of Camerino (academic year 1972-73). From a.y. 1970-71 and until 1972-73 Prof. Pier Luigi Ipata is director of the institute of biological chemistry. Prof. Ipata will continue his research on the functional characterization of phosphodiesterases in Camerino (ref.10); the characterization of this class of enzymes, together with adenosine deaminase and cytidine deaminase and more generally the enzymes involved in the metabolism of nucleotides will become the third pillar characterizing the Biochemistry at the University of Camerino up to the present days (ref. 11-14).

Following the transfer of Prof. Ipata, the chair of Biochemistry in Pharmacy and the direction of the Institute of Biological Chemistry was held first by Prof. Giuseppe Rotilio (from the 1973-74 academic year – to the 1976-77 academic year) then by Prof. Francesca Riva (from the 1979-80 academic year until 10/24/1982), then by Prof. Donatella Barra (1982-1983 academic year) and subsequently by Prof. Lello Zolla (1986-1991).

In the meantime, in 1968, at the Faculty of Sciences MFN, a chair of Molecular Biology was established, the first in Italy, held by Prof. Eraldo Antonini (1968-1973) who was succeeded by Prof. Maurizio Brunori (1973-1975). The early 70s were particularly lively for the Biochemistry at the University of Camerino, in fact, alongside the historic Institute of Biological Chemistry, pertaining to the Faculty of Pharmacy, were established in the academic year. 1973-74, at the Faculty of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences, the Laboratory of Applied Biochemistry, directed by Prof. Giulio Magni (full professor from the 1982-83 academic year) and the Molecular Biology Laboratory previously directed by Prof. Brunori (1973-1975) and then by Prof. Franca Ascoli Marchetti (from the 1975-76 academic year, full professor from the 1982-83 academic year). Prof. Giulio Magni will be director of the applied biochemistry laboratory until 1989. Prof. Francesco Bossa will replace him only in the academic year. 1975-76 as director of the applied biochemistry laboratory. In those same years, various courses in the biochemistry area were activated, held by both internal professors, such as Prof.ssa Ines Binotti, professor of Biological Chemistry for the degree course in Biological Sciences and Prof. Giulio Magni, professor in the same subject in the degree course in

Chemistry, which external students such as Profs. Bruno Giardina, Francesco Bossa, Donatella Barra, Guido Tettamanti, Emilia Chiancone, Sandro Kovacs, Alfredo Colosimo, Bruno Venerando, Massimiliano Coletta.

In the mid-1980s, the three structures, all housed in the "historic" buildings in via Scalzino, merge into the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Animal Biology (the Institute of Biological Chemistry and the Laboratory of Molecular Biology) and into the Department of Comparative Morphological and Biochemical Sciences (the Laboratory of Applied Biochemistry) and subsequently (year 2010) in the School of Biosciences and Biotechnology.



Photo of one of the annual snacks with porchetta at the library of the Institute of Biological Chemistry in the 1980s. The following can be recognized standing from the left: Francesco Bossa, Franco Marmocchi, Ines Binotti, Giancarlo Falcioni, Candido Rosati, Evandro Fioretti, Guido Cantalupo. Sessions: Prof. Francesca Riva's mother, Francesca Riva, Franca Ascoli.

At the beginning of the 90s the biochemists, who in the meantime had trained, were placed in the Faculties of Sciences, Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences (Prof. Evandro Fioretti full professor since 1990, and Prof. Paolo Natalini, full professor since 1992), of Pharmacy (Prof. Giancarlo Falcioni, full professor since 1994) and Veterinary (Prof. Alberto Vita, full professor since 1994), Prof. Franco Marmocchi and Prof. Ivano Santarelli, as associate professors at the Faculty of Pharmacy. Meanwhile, some of them (Prof. Giulio Magni, Prof. Silverio Ruggeri) will realize their brilliant career at the University of Ancona.

A large group of young researchers, who grew up in that period, subsequently ensured an excellent future for Biochemistry in the Camerino University.

After the 1997 earthquake, the Departments of Comparative Morphological and Biochemical Sciences (in 2007) and of Molecular, Cellular and Animal Biology (in 2008) were transferred to the new location in Madonna delle Carceri.

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