



**FONDAZIONE
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MENARINI**

EN



THE ARCHIGINNASIO IN BOLOGNA

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON
THE IMPACT OF GENOMIC DEEP SEQUENCING ON
PAEDIATRIC RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE**

BOLOGNA (ITALY), 19TH AND 20TH NOVEMBER, 2015



A BRIEF HISTORY

Fondazione Internazionale Menarini is proud to promote in Bologna the International Symposium on *The Impact of Genomic Deep Sequencing on Paediatric Research and Clinical Practice*, organized by the Paediatrics Unit of Sant'Orsola Academic Hospital of the Alma Mater Studiorum University in Bologna.

The selected venue for the convention is the *Stabat Mater Hall* located in the Archiginnasio palace, one of the most ancient and important buildings in the history of Bologna that became seat of the ancient prestigious University from 1563 to 1803.

The Latin word *Archigymnasium* refers to the high academic study level and originates from the ancient Greek *gymnasium* or the place where athletes used to practise naked (*gymnos*). With the time, the Greeks started to use the word *gymnasium* also to define education institutions, as they considered athletics and cultural, spiritual

and medical education the correct activities for the harmonious and balanced developing of student's body and mind.



The story of Bologna is inseparably linked to its University that is the oldest one in the western world and, for that, the city is called "la dotta" (the learned). The educational institution was founded in 1088 with the name *Alma Mater Studiorum Bononiensis* meaning "nourishing mother of the study". It was born as a free and independent student institution forming the *universitas* or the community (thus the University) divided in Italian students, or the *citramontanorum*, and in foreign students, or the *ultramontanorum*. They were all associated in *nations* (from Latin "natio" meaning "being born") i.e. regional corporations of students of mutual aid and often strongly conflicting.

The first academic chairs in the Archiginnasio were of civil and canon law and their students were called *Legisti* (Jurists). These faculties were considered more prestigious in comparison to those of Arts that were introduced later - *universitas artiarum et medicorum* – with the teachings of Philosophy, Medicine, Mathematics, Natural and Physical Science for the students called *Artisti* (Artists).



In the coat of arms of the University, it remains present the emblems of the Corporations that founded the Studio to this day: Jurists and Artists with the three Medical studies represented by protectors Saints Cosma and Damian.

The *Archigymnasium Bononiense* was inaugurated on October 21th, 1563 and was only built in a year and a half by the Bolognese architect Antonio Morandi. The palace was commissioned by Pope Pius IV through his Legate, cardinal Charles Borromeo, and his vice Legate Pier Donato Cesi in order to gather in one building the University that, at that time, was scattered around the town.

For centuries, academics and literati from all over the world stayed in Bologna and attended the lessons at the *Archigymnasium* that, still today, retains its original appearance and architecture. It was built on two floors with a front portico of thirty arches. The courtyard still contains the old loggia that incorporates the former church of *Santa Maria dei Bulgari* and two large staircases made to reach the upper storey endowed with ten classrooms and two great halls. Nice to know is that the two staircases were deliberately built separated to avoid mixing *Legisti* and *Artisti*, as there were strong rivalries between them. Today, the main hall once used by *Legisti*, has become an important conference room called the *Stabat Mater Hall* and it will be the venue for our Symposium. The hall for *Artisti* is, since 1838, the reading room of the civic library.

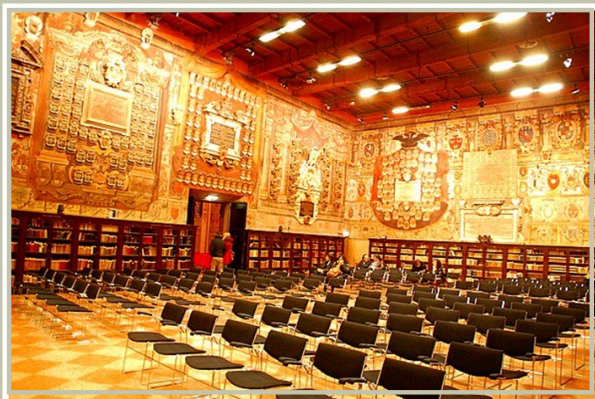


The classrooms' walls, the vaults of staircases and the open galleries are entirely decorated with a multitude of commemorative inscriptions called *memorie* (memoirs), monuments dedicated to the teachers of the Studio, and nearly 6.000 coats-of-arms and names of students who studied at this prestigious

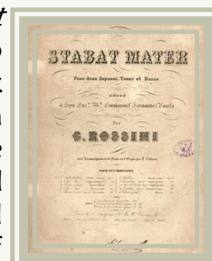
University. It represents the largest heraldic complex to be found anywhere in the world.



Also the Legisti hall is full of decorations and in 1842 it was renamed *Stabat Mater Hall* in memory of the *Stabat Mater* composition by Gioacchino Rossini performed here on 18th-19th-20th March 1842 with four vocal soloists, chorus, orchestra and directed by Gaetano Donizetti.



Rossini returned to his public with this new composition, after ten years of silence and the opera *William Tell*, meeting immediately an enormous success. He set to music the text of the mediaeval Latin hymn *Stabat Mater* commonly attributed to the Italian Franciscan monk Jacopone da Todi who lived in XIII century. It recounts the experience of the Mother of God



at the foot of the Holy Cross and Catholics use to pray this hymn during Lent and Holy Week and it is also part of the liturgy on the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary on September 15.

The ambient of *Stabat Mater Hall* is majestic and is one of the more representative room of the ancient University, full of students' emblems, inscriptions and monuments of teachers of the Study.



Among them, one of the biggest is the two-headed eagle of the Germanic homeland covered with the royal crown of the Holy Roman Empire that reminds us how large the students' *Natio Germanorum* was and it hosts the monument of Cardinal Fabrizio Savelli (1648). Among the coats of arms of noble families, towering above the former location of the teacher's desk, there is a fresco of a Madonna



with Child of unknown artist, painted in 1569.

The school of Medicine became faculty here in 1219 thanks to a Papal Bull and included three types of lessons: practice, philosophy and astrology or the study of the influence of the stars on the human health. The astrology teaching provided the first impulse to astronomical studies in Bologna whose most famous student was the Polish Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus), of German origin, who first attended Law and later Medicine, forming the basis of modern astronomy.

Initially, the only texts used to understand the human body were those of the Greek physicians Hippocrates and Galen, written in pre-Christian era, and the practice was only based on the study of animals. Since the arrival at the Archiginnasio of the Florentine Professor Taddeo Alderotti (1223-1303) in 1260, Medicine teaching gained prominence and fame. He became the most famous doctor during Middle Age and wrote the most ancient Italian medical book on the preservation of health where he collected the clinical cases, once called *consilia*.



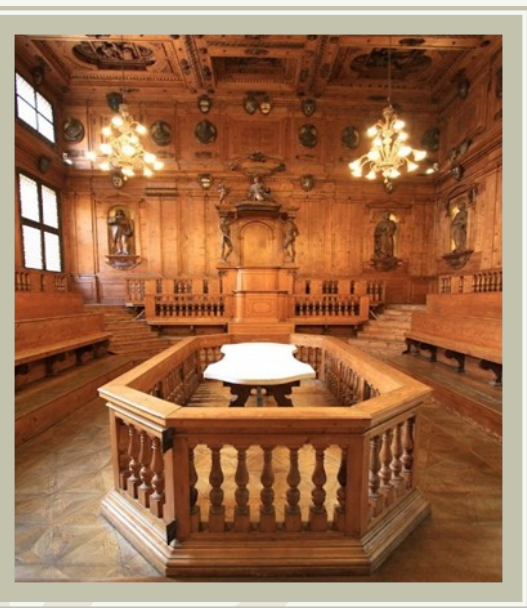
The teaching of surgery was introduced little later as it was first considered a subordinate subject. At the beginning, the anatomical dissections were performed on animals only and later on human cadavers also who were either of individuals who had been executed or of prostitutes or of persons not claimed by their relatives. In the mediaeval paintings it is noted that the dissections were performed by ordinary barbers who showed the parts of the body to the public and to medical students, whilst the anatomical scientist sat on a chair directing the work and reading from anatomical texts.

Modern surgery officially started in 1315 with Mondino de' Luzzi (1270 – 1326), a pupil of Taddeo Alderotti. He dated the beginning of regular systematic teaching of anatomy with public human dissection as a fundamental of the *curriculum studi* of medicians and wrote *Anothomia*, the first anatomical atlas used in all medical universities until the XVI century. After him, Andreas van Wesel (1514-1564), a Flemish anatomist called Vesalius, performed dissection as the primary teaching tool, handling the work himself and showing his students the fine details of anatomy in anatomical posters.

He is considered the father of modern anatomy in XVI century. Only years later the Bolognese surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzi (1545-1599) became important as pioneer of plastic and reconstructive surgery.

In 1637, an anatomical theatre for the medical faculty was built following the project of the Bolognese Antonio Levante. The hall was designed in the form of an amphitheatre to offer the best views of anatomy lessons and was operative until 1803 when the anatomy department was transferred to Palazzo Poggi.

It is a single rectangular room, entirely covered in carved wood with a dissection table in the centre, topped with marble, and the *Magister podium* (teacher's podium) on the right side. Cedar-wood tiered seats hosted once the public and the students during dissections. On the speaker's podium, there are two wooden statues of the "Spellati" (without skin) by Ercole Lelli showing the main groups of muscles of the human body and supporting the canopy above the lecturer's chair. On the walls and on the ceiling there are sculptural works dedicated to famous surgeons and wooden coat-of-arms of famous professors.



The Archiginnasio terminated its university function in 1803. Since 1839, it has been the seat of the *Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio*, the largest civic library in Emilia-Romagna. It preserves important texts on history, philosophy, political science, literature, art, and a section on Bolognese culture. It also houses approximately 35,000 manuscripts and incunables.

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