

# In memory of Prof. Massimo Cocchi, past president and honorary president of the Italian Society for Experimental Biology (Società Italiana di Biologia Sperimentale - SIBS)

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Prof. Massimo Cocchi, one of the most experienced scientists in nutritional biochemistry, past and honorary President of the Italian Society for Experimental Biology (Società Italiana di Biologia Sperimentale), passed away on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in his house in San Lazzaro di Savena (Bologna). He was a man of the highest value both from the scientific and from the human point of view. He was a landmark for a lot of students, as well as for his friends and colleagues who always appreciated his high moral standing and his immeasurable competence not only in the scientific field which was the subject of his work during all life, but also in many other fields of biology and medicine, so that anyone who met him could always receive a suggestion or a reliable scientific opinion.

Prof. Massimo Cocchi was born in Bologna on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945. He was a physician (MD) and obtained the degree in Medicine and Surgery in 1971 at the “Alma Mater Studiorum” University of Bologna; but, as he wrote in some of his scripts, soon he was aware that his calling was not the clinics and the hospital wards, but an increasing engagement in the biomedical research; so he started his career of researcher at the Institute of Biological Chemistry of the University of Bologna and started to occupy himself in the field of nutritional biochemistry, a subject which get him the knowing and appreciation of the scientific community worldwide. Notably, Prof. Cocchi studied the biochemistry



Photo of Prof. Massimo Cocchi: courtesy of Ms. Bianca Cremonini.

of lipids and fatty acids at tissue, cell and cell membrane levels. Several of his published papers dealt with the biochemical functions of linoleic acid and of cholesterol. In this research field, he was engaged in many important national and international research projects.

Prof. Cocchi began his career at the University of Bologna during the Academic Year 1977/78, when he obtained the teaching task for Nutrition Science at the Touristic Studies School of the Economy and Commerce Faculty. Subsequently, in 1990 he was appointed as Honorary Teacher in Nutrition Biochemistry at the Scottish Agricultural College (Glasgow University), where, five years later, he obtained the Full Professor office, and in 1998 was nominated Professor in Perpetuity. In 2005 Prof. Cocchi passed again to the University of Bologna, as Contract Professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, a task which he maintained till his retirement.

Prof. Cocchi was highly active also for his participation in scientific societies, notably in two of them: the ARNA (Associazione Ricercatori Nutrizione e Alimenti – Association of Researchers for Nutrition and Feed), of which he was President from 2003 to 2009, and the SIBS (Società Italiana di Biologia Sperimentale – Italian Society for Experimental Biology), of which he was President of the Bologna Section “Oliviero Mario Olivo” as from 2005, National President from 2016 to 2019, and subsequently Honorary President. Furthermore, Prof. Cocchi was member from 2010 of QPP (Quantum Paradigm Psychopathology), an international group of scientists, and President of the “Research Institute for Quantitative and Quantum Dynamics of Living Organisms. Center for Medicine, Mathematics & Philosophy Studies” of QPP.

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Received for publication: 19 October 2022.

Accepted for publication: 19 October 2022.

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Journal of Biological Research 2022; 95:10938

doi:10.4081/jbr.2022.10938

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As from 2014 he was Correspondent Member and as from 2017 Ordinary Member of the Accademia dei Georgofili (Firenze). In 2020 he was nominated member of the Accademia delle Scienze Mediche (Medical Sciences Academy) of Palermo.

The research activity of Prof. Cocchi was intense and is well documented by the number of published papers, books, communications to meetings, conferences and congresses. A list of his publications can be found at <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=55526544600>. Notably, one of the main research subjects was the study of platelet fatty acids in depressive and ischemic patients, for which he obtained the nomination at the Kyoto Prize in 2008, an international award for the making of a bio-mathematical combination to recognize and diagnose psychic pathologies such as Major Depressive Disorder and Bipolar Disorder, as well as ischemic cardiopathy with coronary plaque.

As reported in his curriculum vitae, he studied ten main subjects (metabolism of ethanol and lipids, unusual fatty acids, nutritional and tissular lipids, long-chain fatty acids metabolism in ruminants, n-6 and n-3 fatty acids, essential fatty acids, cell nutrition, changes in lipid metabolism during growth and development, platelet fatty acids in the depressive disorder and in the ischemic cardiopathy, animal microbiota), whose interesting results can be found in his numerous publications on the matters.

In the last years, without leaving the scientific activity, Prof. Cocchi started the publication of essays, among which “Freccia dell’Arciere”, “Di Fronte alla Vita”, “Dell’uomo, della Coscienza, carta psichiatrica”, “Anche i geni hanno un cervello di gallina”, “T’ang”, “Pensieri Spezzati”, “D’Altri pensieri Spezzati”, “Nel Tempo, Nei Pensieri”, “Ballarò e l’Asimmetria” edited by Plumelia Edizioni, “La Vita Stanca” edited by Manni Editore, “La Valigia dei Ricordi” and “Breve Dialogo Sulla Natura e Sull’Uomo, tra Filosofia e Scienza” edited by Olio Officina Edizioni. In 2018 he won the “Premio Letteratura” at the XXXIV Premio Letterario dell’Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Napoli, with the tale “Quel Pugno di Terra bastarda”, subsequently published by ICI edizioni.

In conclusion, we wish remember Prof. Cocchi to all scientific community and to anyone who wish know his outstanding scientific and moral caliber; in addition to being a scientist of high profile, he was a man always generous and available for all who have received more and more in advice, friendship and teaching.

All information have been derived from personnel knowledge and friendship with Prof. Cocchi and his family, as well as from what is available in the website of Publishers of his books and in the website of the University of Bologna, where his curriculum vitae to date is still available.