

Origins and development of Bologna's Dermatological School

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SUMMARY

The first note on dermatology in Bologna goes back to the year 1200, when Taddeo degli Alderotti introduced the bedside teaching. At the time of the syphilis epidemic the hospital of Saint Job was established to care for these patients by the end of 15th century. During the following centuries many famous physicians were practising and teaching medicine, dermatology included. The greatest advancement of dermatology in Bologna was however in the 20th century. Among the prominent dermatologists at least a few deserved to be mentioned p. Gamberini, S. Giovannini, D. Majocchi and L. Martinotti.

The oldest documents relating to dermatology in Bologna mention a famous clinical physician, Taddeo degli Alderotti, who was teaching at the end of 1200 (1) and who, unlike his colleagues, lecturers gave instruction at the bedside of his patients drawing attention to the symptoms of the illness described in his writings, "Consilia Medicinalis", which include numerous skin diseases. The practical clinical scope of Taddeo was followed by his disciples: Tommaso del Garbo, Gentile da Foligno and Bartolomeo da Varignana.

In the following century Taddeo's method was abandoned and there was a resurgence of the theoretical method whereby dermatology appeared only occasionally in the comments of Galen's work "De Tumoribus praeter naturam" (2), which was preferred by Celso. The perfection of Galen's language was causing major diffi-

culties of interpretation Galen was also considered to be more of a scholar rather than a medical practitioner. (2).

During this period, however, Arab authors were highly appreciated and cautery was in great vogue until Federico Borgognoni (3) restored the use of the scalpel.

The treatment of wounds was the prerogative of surgeons, supreme experts in the topical interventions and use of medicines designed for external local application, so that the role of surgeons in the treatment of skin diseases became almost a matter of the past. (4).

With the advent of syphilis at the end of the 15. century the administrators of the city of Bologna deserved well of their townspeople when they founded a hospital for patients stricken with syphilis. Thus they pro-

KEY WORDS

dermatological school, development, Bologna, University

