

INTRODUCTION

This volume is devoted to Benedetto (Bettino) Lanza, the founder of modern Italian chiropterology and our mentor. Bettino was born in 1924 and his interest in bats dates back to the mid-1950s, when he published one of the first modern synopses of this group. The late Otto von Helversen told one of us (MR) that he was driven to study bats after reading Bettino's book. The new and enlarged edition of this book is now in press. Bettino is also working on a book about Eastern African bats. These books represent just two of the many projects he is currently engaged in.

The strong personality of Bettino is reflected in his work. This is characterized by a thorough search of the available literature to ensure complete documentation, a meticulous ability to write clearly, and exhaustively cover the subject, and a willingness to critique his work and accept the criticism of others in pursuit of the best possible result. His dedication to go above and beyond what most people could accomplish is tempered by his wonderful sense of humor, which has a strong facet of self-mockery that is so typical of Tuscan people, and always makes him delight in his work.

It is not always easy to work with Bettino, because he expects complete devotion to the work from others, just as he does from himself. Anyone who survives this approach will learn much not only about the natural world, but also, which is more important, about himself. We appreciate many of Bettino's characteristics, particularly his keen intellect, his infallible logic and his ability to organize thousands of pieces of information and synthesize these into a great mosaic that is both new and remarkable. His publications are indeed noteworthy and extremely diverse. Once we asked Bettino how the dickens he can do everything and also does it so well. He replied: "Now I am aged, I need less sleep and then can devote more time to my work"!

Paolo Agnelli

Marco Riccucci

A SUMMARY OF LANZA'S RESEARCH ON MAMMALS

1. Ethology

Bat banding in Ostia Antica (Rome) and results of homing experiments (1958).

2. Biology of reproduction

The buccal pad, a peculiar structure occurring in some bats of the family Vespertilionidae, was discovered in *Nyctalus noctula* by Mohr (1932), who very briefly described its external appearance. Later on, this structure was *independently* rediscovered in the same species by Harrison & Davies (1949) and in two *Pipistrellus* and *Hypsugo savii* by Lanza (1956), who described its external morphology and histology. The buccal pad is situated in the *vestibulum oris*, close to the mouth commissure and consists of a thickening of the stratified squamous epithelium of the mucous membrane lining the upper labio-gingival fornix; its cells are filled with different quantities of a fatty substance, which, when abundant, gives it a whitish, yellowish or a reddish-orange colour. Lanza later demonstrated (1956; see also 1959 and 1970), mainly with histological techniques, that the buccal pad is a seasonal character in males controlled by the male sex hormone, as it attains its maximum development in rutting males when the *cauda epididymi* is filled with sperm, whereas it is much less developed in females and in males with empty epididymis. Research in the field recently confirmed Lanza's conclusions (2003).

3. Taxonomy and systematics

Lanza's studies on the *bacula* of European bats allowed the discrimination of some sibling species, for example *Plecotus auritus* from *Plecotus austriacus* (quoted as *P. wardi*) (1959 and 1960). Studies on the *bacula* of the flying-foxes of the genus *Pteropus* demonstrated that this structure has no phylogenetic value (1963 and 1969).

Research on the postembryonic growth of the skull in the pteropodid genus *Epomophorus* revealed the existence of allometric phenomena that involved the synonymization of at least one species described from juveniles (1961)

Two papers (1963 and 2002) deal respectively with a redescription of the African molossid bat *Nyctinomus aloysiisabaudiae* and the genesis of the erythristic colour phase occurring in some Sardinian specimens of the rhinolophid bat *Rhinolophus mehelyi*.

4. Chorology

Notes on the bats living in the «Grotte di Castellana» caves (Bari), with discovery of a species new to the Italian Peninsula (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*) (1959). Lanza documented the occurrence of the Northern bat, *Eptesicus nilssonii*, in Croatia (recently rediscovered in this country!) and published notes on the bat fauna of Petālā Id. (Greece) (1957). Another paper (1968) deals with some bats from Somalia.

5. Fauna and biogeography

The first large monograph on Italian Chiroptera was published by Lanza in 1959 and it is still considered one of the best ever appeared on European bats; a new up-to-date edition

Introduction

(about 900 pp.) is in press. Some papers (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) correspond to up-to-date but concise Italian and English editions of the Italian bat fauna.

Other papers (1952, 1961, 1971) deal with Tuscan cave-dwelling bats, southern Italian bats and mammals living in the Apuan Alps (NW Tuscany), respectively (see also «*Chorology*»).

The biogeography of the Italian Chiroptera is treated in the paper published in 1985.

6. Parasitology

After publishing a few papers (1950, 1998, 1999), Lanza published the first exhaustive monograph on the ecto- and endoparasites of European bats, also including parasites found on or in specimens collected outside Europe (1999). In this book, based on the analysis of more than 1100 papers, about 756 taxa are cited and briefly treated.

Currently, 42 taxa have been named after Benedetto Lanza: 34 invertebrates (1 genus, 25 species, 7 subspecies, 1 variety) and 8 vertebrates (1 genus, 2 species, 5 subspecies); and 71 taxa have been named by Benedetto Lanza, sometimes with his collaborators: 7 invertebrates (1 genus, 4 species, 2 subspecies) and 71 vertebrates (5 genera, 29 species, 27 subspecies).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND ART

Lanza contributed to the artistic appreciation and scientific understanding of the world famous collection of anatomical waxes housed in the Zoological Section «La Specola» of the Museum of Natural History of the University of Florence (XVII-XIX century) by writing a book in collaboration with Maria Luisa Puccetti Azzaroli, Marta Poggesi and Antonio Martelli (1979; 1997, second revised and up-to-date edition; 1995, English translation of the text, with same additions), and a paper (1984) on the so-called «Decomposable Venus» (1984).

Different subjects are dealt with in various other papers (1991, the zoological collections by Ruggero Tozzi; 1992, zoological and eco-ethological research of the University of Florence in Latin America; 1994 and 1996, the situation of herpetological research in Italy; 1982 and 1987, short notes on the Zoological Section of the Museum of Natural History of the University of Florence; 1993, biological expertise for the restoration and conservation of cultural heritage).

DICTIONARIES

Lanza coordinated and supervised the writing of the systematic botany and zoology definitions for Devoto & Oli's dictionary of the Italian language, one of the most important ever published; he personally wrote some entries on botany (letters A-C) and the entries on Pisces *sensu lato*, Amphibia, Reptilia and Aves.

Lanza has also been coordinator, supervisor and editor of a large Dictionary of the Animal Kingdom (fossils excluded) of which he personally wrote the general entries, in collaboration with Stefano Vanni, as well as the entries dealing with Platyhelminthes, Gastrotricha, Rotiferi, Nematoda, Nematomorpha, Kinorhyncha, Acanthocephala, Cephalochordata, Cephalaspidomorpha, Pteraspidomorpha, Chondrichthyes, Osteichthyes, Amphibia and Reptilia (1982 and 1985).

CURRICULUM VITAE

Benedetto Giuseppe Antonio Lanza, usually called «Bettino», medical doctor and amateur-turned-professional naturalist, was born on 24 May 1924 in Florence (Tuscany; Italy). He had a deep boyhood interest in natural history, but studied medicine and received an honorary degree in medicine and surgery. Because of his interest in natural history, he limited his medical practice and instead devoted his life to the study of morphology, anatomy, biology and taxonomy of a number of animal groups, especially amphibians, reptiles, bats, Mollusca Soleolifera and phreaticolous aquatic Crustacea. He was selected as professor of General Biology at the University of Bologna in 1969, elected full professor of General Biology in the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences at the University of Florence in 1971, and appointed director of the Zoological Museum «La Specola» of the aforementioned University a year later.

Among his many papers and books he was most prolific in the subjects of herpetology (c. 230 titles), mammalogy (c. 30, mainly on bats; see below), malacology (13, especially on Soleolifera, with the discovery of self-reproduction in Vaginulidae and sperm intramitochondrial glycogen), and stygobiontic Crustacea (4).

1952-1955 President of the *Gruppo Speleologico Fiorentino del Club Alpino Italiano* (Florentine Cave Group of the Italian Alpine Club).

1967 (27.IX) Appointed corresponding member of the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft in Basel*.

1979 Illustrated an issue of a set of four stamps and a souvenir sheet illustrating four species of freshwater fishes endemic to Somalia, one of which - *Pardiglanis tarabinii* Poll, Lanza et Romoli Sassi, 1972 (Siluriformes, Bagridae) - was described by Lanza himself; first case in the history of philately.

1980. Elected honorary member of the *Gruppo Speleologico Fiorentino del Club Alpino Italiano* (Florentine Cave Group of the Italian Alpine Club).

1982 Illustrated an issue of a set of four stamps and a souvenir sheet illustrating four species of Somali snakes, one of which - the endemic Colubridae *Spalerosophis josephscortecii* Lanza 1966 - was also described by the illustrator himself.

1985 (20.VIII). Elected by acclamation President of the *Societas Europaea Herpetologica* during the Third Ordinary General Meeting of *S.E.H.*, Prague, Czech Republic (end of his term in office in September 1989).

1992 Voluntarily resigned as Director of the *Zoological Museum «La Specola» of the University of Florence*. Appointed member of the *Comitato Scientifico e Tecnico dell'Orto Botanico «P. Pellegrini»* (Scientific and Technical Committee of the Botanical Garden «P. Pellegrini») (Apuan Alps; municipality of Massa, province of Massa-Carrara; Tuscany). Appointed member of the *Consiglio Scientifico del «Centro di Studio per la Faunistica ed Ecologia Tropicali» del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche* (Scientific Council of the «Centre for the Study of Tropical Fauna and Ecology» of the National Research Council).

1993 Unanimously elected provisional President of the *Societas Herpetologica Italica* on the occasion of its foundation, Massa Marittima (Grosseto), 20 February 1993. Unanimously elected President of the *Societas Herpetologica Italica* during the First Ordinary General Meeting of *S.H.I.*, Florence, 12 June 1993. Elected President (9.III) of the *Consiglio Scientifico del «Centro di Studio per la Faunistica ed Ecologia Tropicali» del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*. Unanimously elected Honorary Member of the *Associazione Teriologica Italiana* [Association of Italian Mammalogists] during the National Meeting of *A.T.I.*, Florence, 3 December 1993.

Introduction

1994 (18.IV). Unanimously elected member of the *Accademia Lunigianese di Scienze «Giovanni Capellini»*, La Spezia.

1995 (26.VIII). Unanimously elected Honorary Member of the *Societas Europaea Herpetologica* during the Eighth Ordinary General Meeting of *S.E.H.*, Bonn.

1996 Retired on 31.X.1996, three years before the expiry of his term (31.X.1999). Unanimously elected Honorary Curator of the *Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze* (Natural History Museum of the University of Florence).

1997 Voluntarily resigned as President of the *Societas Herpetologica Italica*. Unanimously elected the first Honorary Member of the *Societas Herpetologica Italica* during the meeting of the *S.H.I.*, Rome, 13 September 1997.

1999 (11.XII). Unanimously elected Honorary Member of the *Gruppo Italiano Ricerca Chiroteri* (Italian Bat Research Group) during the meeting of the *G.I.R.C.*, Riserva Naturale Orientata di Onferno (Rimini).

2002 (11.XII). Unanimously elected Corresponding Academic of the *Accademia dei Georgofili*, Firenze.

Promoter (1966) and member (1966-1988) of the *Gruppo Ricerche Scientifiche e Tecniche Subacquee (Firenze)* [Underwater Scientific and Technical Research Group (Florence)].

EXPEDITIONS

He participated, often as scientific coordinator, in several expeditions to Egypt (Shadwan Island), Tunisia (Galite Archipelago), Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Ecuador (Galápagos Islands), Argentina (Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego), France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece (Crete Island), Saudi Arabia (Farasan Islands), Jordan, Yemen Arab Republic, India, and Australia.

HERBARIUM

The «Herbarium Lanza», of more than 10,500 sheets, is housed in the «Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali», Turin.

FAVOURITE HOBBIES

Painting, drawing, piano-accordion, electronic organ, piano.

ADVISORY BOARDS

Member of advisory boards of *Zeitschrift für Säugetierkunde* (since 1962), *Salamandra (Zeitschrift für Herpetologie und Terrarienkunde)* (1965-1982), *Atti della Società Toscana di Scienze Naturali* (since 1981), *Alytes* (since 1982), *Monitore Zoologico Italiano (Italian Journal of Zoology)* (from 1982 to its closure in 1987), *Animalia* (since 1983), *Hystrix, The Italian Journal of Mammalogy* (since 1985), *Tropical Zoology* (since 1987), *Fauna of Saudi Arabia* (since 1988), *Atti della Società Italiana di Scienze Naturali* (since 1997), *Acta Herpetologica* (since 2006).

PUBLICATIONS ON MAMMALS

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Introduction

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Introduction

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