

Dear Members:

In the Chianti Region, May is the period for bottling young wine while the reserve is decanted into the oak barrels, on the period of falling moon: therefore, we begin with the mythic history of the birth of Dionysus, the God who developed the culture of wine throughout the world.



Proto-Apulian Red-figure volute krater from Ceglie del Campo, Late 5th - Early 4th c. b.c. National Museum, Taranto, Italy

It starts with a new love story of Zeus, this time with Semele, the beautiful Daughter of the Thebe's King, Kadmos. Zeus was passionately in love with her and had promised to fulfil all of her desires. Of course, Hera, Zeus's Wife, was very jealous of Semele and tricked her into asking Zeus to show himself in all his splendor in order that she might be sure of his identity. And he did: Zeus appeared to Semele surrounded by flashes of lightning and thunderbolts. Because no mortal can withstand the vision of Zeus, Semele and her palace in Thebes were burned to ashes. Knowing that Semele was pregnant; Zeus rescued the embryo from her uterus and stitched it into his own thigh, thereby also avoiding further danger to the offspring from Hera. At the right time, Dionysus was delivered from the thigh and became the god of wine and fertility (known to the Romans as Bacchus), a powerful and disquieting god, mixing up in his complex nature merriness and fear, reality and illusion. The baby Dionysus was brought up by the nymphs, Satyrs and Maenads, who later followed him in his mission of teaching the culture of wine and creativity, and carrying the thyrsus, symbol of fertility and reproduction.

This myth describes a very unusual ectopic pregnancy leading to the birth of a live baby derived from the Greek word "ektapos" meaning out of place, an abnormally implanted gestation outside the uterine cavity: the first description of an ectopic pregnancy is dated 963 by Abulcasis, a Spanish-Arab, considered the Father of modern surgery.

Moving to the SGI activities, the following news items are to share with you:

- 1) The SGI is establishing a new group, Women in Reproductive Sciences (WRS), whose mission is to enhance careers for women in reproductive sciences through networking, mentoring and advocacy. This has developed from the SGI Strategic plan from 2006-07 under Linda Giudice's Presidency. Linda recently canvassed all female members of the SGI their interest in such a group. The overwhelming majority of respondents were in favor of this. Linda will be working with some of the senior women in the SGI to form a leadership Council for WRS. More about this next month.
- 2) The SGI website is under revision by Linda Gildersleeve, the web master. At my request, she is changing some page content, along with some of the links on the sidebar. Our Web Site is the most common way to introduce ourselves to the rest of the scientific world, showing the best SGI characteristics. While the Communication Committee is the official coordinator of this project, any of you may contribute new ideas and suggestions to Kirk Conrad, Chair of the Committee (kpconrad@UFL.EDU). You may also contribute updates to some of the existing files, like "Announcements" or "Events Calendar" or "Bulletin Board", by writing directly to Linda lgilders@acog.org.

On www.sgionline.org an updated version of the 2009 SGI Annual Meeting (Glasgow, March 18-21, 2009) is now available. John Challis and Sarah Berga have made some brilliant changes to the classic format. In particular, the in-training member contributions will be highlighted; a.) the President's Presenter Session will become the President's Trainee Session; b.) the President's Trainee Awardees will be announced at the Awards Ceremony which, has been moved to Friday morning following the C.D. Christian Distinguished Lecture.

The main lecturers, the debates, the mini symposia and the meet-the-expert involve incredible high-level speakers group and the most update results will come from your abstracts.

Regarding the receptivity of Glasgow, two weeks ago I visited the venue again. There are 3 international airports (2 in Glasgow and 1 in Edinburgh) which, are well connected with the entire world (direct flights from USA and Canada) and several low-cost Airlines will allow less expensive flights from all over Europe. Therefore, start to plan your trip.

- 3) The 3rd SGI International Summit will be on "Preeclampsia" and related diseases and will be held in Sendai (Japan), November 12-14, 2009. Kuni Okamura will Chair the Summit, and the Preliminary Scientific Program is now available on the SGI website.
- 4) In order to pursue the goal of having an "all-year Society" I am organizing in Siena a Scientific Forum on "Inflammation and Reproduction" which will be held June 29 - July 2, 2008. It will serve as a study for creating a model for future SGI scientific-educational initiatives. Indeed, one of the primary focus' of the Educational Committee is to promote groups of interests aiming at either educating young trainees, or debating a focus topic organizing meetings with a smaller, more highly focused audience. In this manner we will have more opportunities to promote the scientific work of the SGI, other than at the Annual Meeting in March and the bi-annual SGI Summit meeting and the young investigators will find a Forum for learning and exchanging ideas

Cheers with the new wine,



Felice Petraglia
SGI President, 2008-2009