

ALBERTO QUADRIO CURZIO

Chairman of the Joint Commissions established by
the International Balzan Foundation "Prize", the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei
and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences

FOREWORD

It is a great honour and a remarkable satisfaction for me to write the foreword to this first volume in "The Annual Balzan Lecture" series.

This lecture series is the fruit of the Agreements on Collaboration¹ between the International Balzan Foundation "Prize"² the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei³ and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.⁴

As Chairman of the two Joint Commissions, established to give definitive shape to such collaboration, it is both my pleasure and my duty to illustrate the origin and the aim of this initiative.

Since becoming a member of the Balzan "Prize" Board, I have appreciated the fact that its Chairman, Ambassador Bruno Bottai, has always stressed the inherent international nature of the Balzan, while at the same time recognizing its strong historical roots in Italy and Switzerland. This sentiment – shared by the whole Balzan "Prize" Board, which, I would like to stress, includes Achille Casanova, who is also Chairman of the Balzan "Fund" Board in Zurich – expresses the wishes of the Foundress of the "Balzan" and is actively supported by the Governments of the two Countries.

In order to give practical expression to this, I proposed that the Balzan "Prize" Board should evaluate a possible collaboration with the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. Both of which are highly regarded internationally.

¹ See p. 11.

² See p. 12.

³ See p. 13.

⁴ See p. 13.

This collaboration has now taken concrete shape through the constructive role of the Balzan "Prize" Board.⁵ Its final form is the result of discussions I had with Professor Dr. René Dändliker, former President of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences and Dr. Markus Zürcher, Head of Administration of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, where this proposal was fully elaborated with the collaboration of Dr. Suzanne Werder, Secretary General of the Balzan "Prize" Foundation. I am grateful for the emphatic support given by the former President of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Professor Giovanni Conso, to these endeavours.

I am confident that the opportunities for collaboration provided by the Agreements will be beneficial and will strengthen the international role of the Balzan Foundation in promoting the research endeavours of the Balzan Prizewinners and the public diffusion of the results of these activities.

The institutional activities of the Balzan Foundation will obviously remain untouched by these Agreements where the authority of the General Prize Committee – composed of twenty eminent European scholars and scientists – remains absolute. It must be stressed here that the selection of the Balzan Prizewinners is strictly reserved to the autonomous Balzan General Prize Committee which retains its own full statutory competence within the Balzan Foundation.

The tri-polar collaboration will certainly contribute in its own way to the spreading of the renown of the Balzan Foundation internationally and will embellish its image as one of the most prestigious forms of recognition in the sciences and the humanities.

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Practical collaboration was initiated with a splendid event, held at the Swiss National Science Foundation in Bern last year which took the form of an interdisciplinary Forum involving the 2009 Balzan Prizewinners.

Following on from that, this first Annual Balzan Lecture delivered by Professors Peter and Rosemary Grant on *The Evolution of Darwin's Finches, Mockingbirds and Flies*, is indeed a very appropriate point of departure for this series of lectures. It exemplifies the central purpose

⁵ For composition of members see p. 71.

of the Agreements, to promote the diffusion of cutting edge research and provide a setting for fruitful academic exchanges. Indeed, such exchanges are greatly enhanced by the research projects funded out of the second half of the Grants' Balzan Prize which involve four young researchers.

Peter and Rosemary Grant⁶ were awarded the 2005 Balzan Prize for Population Biology *for their remarkable long-term studies demonstrating evolution in action in Galápagos finches*. This work has assured the Professors Grant a prestigious position in the scientific pantheon. Thus, we are very pleased that they have accepted our invitation to initiate this series of lectures.

I state this both as President of the Joint Commissions overseeing the Agreements and as President of the Class of Moral, Historical and Philological Sciences of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. As an aside I would like to thank my two distinguished colleagues of the Lincei, Professors Giuseppina Barsacchi and Ernesto Capanna for having accepted with enthusiasm to be discussants and to welcome the presence at this annual lecture, of Professor Dr. Peter Suter, President of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. Finally I would like to thank also Professor Lamberto Maffei, President of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, for his hospitality in hosting the first "Annual Balzan Lecture".

⁶ For biographical and bibliographical data see p. 49.