

### Ciril Rozman. *El reto asumido (The challenge accepted)*

*Juan Maldonado & Miquel Rutllant (eds). 312 pp, illustrated. Barcelona, Fundació Medicina y Humanidades Mèdicas, 2008. ISBN 978-84-612-5822-2.*

This book represents a tribute to Professor Ciril Rozman, one of the most distinguished European hematologists of the second half of the twentieth century. At the age of 79, Professor Rozman is regularly going to his office in Barcelona, where he is still busy with many activities directly or indirectly related to hematology.

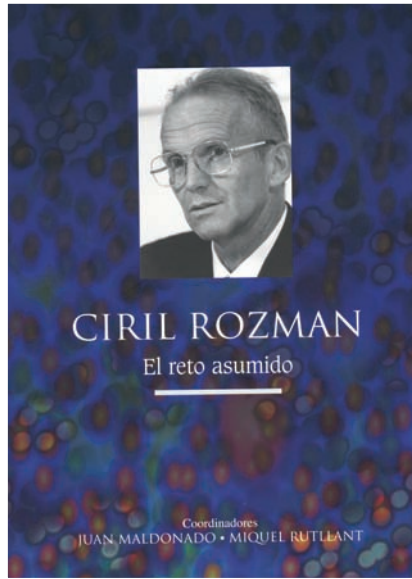
My only problem in reviewing this book has been how to best translate into English the subtitle “El reto asumido”. Eventually I decided for “The challenge accepted”. In fact, Ciril Rozman accepted a great challenge early in his life and wonderfully accomplished his mission.

Ciril Rozman was born in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on June 19, 1929. At the end of World War II, as a component of Yugoslavia, Slovenia became part of the former Sovietic bloc. In May 1945, Ciril decided to leave his country and moved to Italy. He spent three years in the so called “DP Camps”. In 1947 (when I was born), Ciril completed the high school: he got the *Diploma di maturità scientifica*, which not only involved studies of mathematics, physics, chemistry and natural sciences, but also studies of Latin. In 1948 he planned to move to Argentina. However, under peculiar circumstances (see the interesting chapter by Enric Carreras, pages 3-9), he learned that there was a chance of doing university studies in Spain, and eventually moved to Barcelona. He studied medicine and graduated MD in 1954, being then trained in internal medicine in Barcelona with Professor Pedro Pons and Farreras Valentí. Dr. Rozman became Professor of Medicine in Salamanca – one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe – in 1967, and in 1969, he was given the Chair of Medicine at the University of Barcelona, where he completed his extraordinary academic career. In Salamanca, Professor Rozman met one of his best friends, Augustín Ríos Gonzáles, a great morphologist and a unique character in the Spanish hematology scenario (see his chapter on page 33).

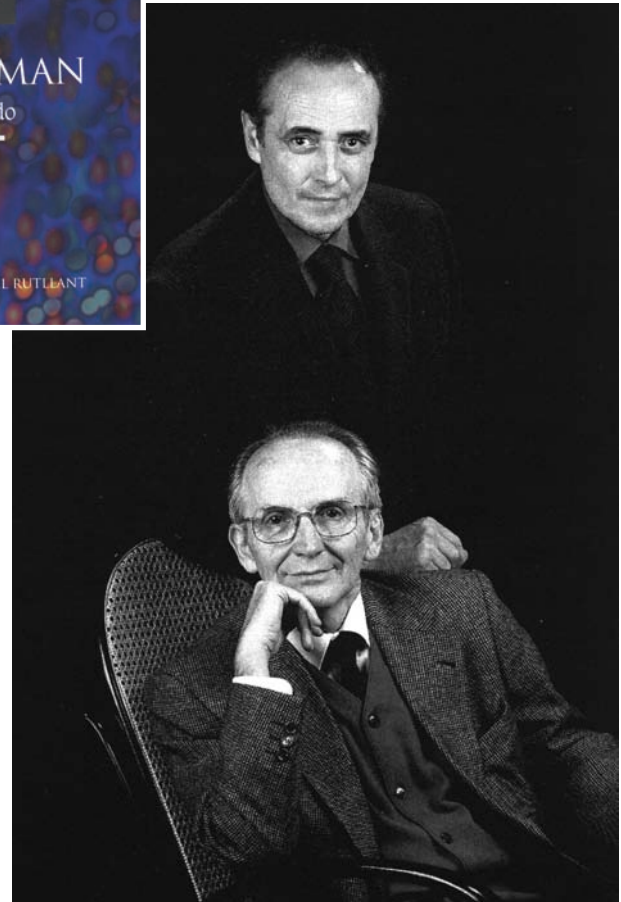
Seventy-four authors contributed to this interesting book, including many famous hematologists. Among them E. Donnall Thomas, 1990 Nobel Laureate for Medicine/Physiology. The long list of authors include

Josep (José) Carreras, celebrated tenor and President of the *Fundació Internacional Josep Carreras para la Lucha Contra la Leucèmia (José Carreras International Leukemia Foundation)*. José Carreras represents a major link between Professor Rozman and Professor Thomas. Ciril Rozman visited Seattle in 1976 just before starting bone marrow transplantation at Hospital Clinic in Barcelona. He went back to Seattle in 1990, a few months before Professor Thomas was given the Nobel Prize. Mr. Carreras had been diagnosed with acute leukemia: following medical treatment in Barcelona, he received a marrow transplant in Seattle and completely recovered. Professor Rozman has always been Vice-President of the José Carreras International Leukemia Foundation, and in 2001 replaced Professor Thomas as a Chair of the institution’s International Scientific Committee.

It is almost impossible to summarize the several outstanding contributions that Professor Rozman gave to hematology. Chapters by Jordi Sierra (page 61 and 69), Evaristo Feliu (page 75) and Francesc Cardellach (page 91) provide a detailed description. Undoubtedly, Professor Rozman is mainly known for



Ciril Rozman - *El reto asumido*.



Josep (José) Carreras and Professor Ciril Rozman.

his studies on chronic lymphocytic leukemia and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. Due to my interest in myelodysplastic syndromes, I found extremely interesting his first paper published in an international (non Spanish) journal, *Acta Haematologica*, entitled *Anaemia refractoria sideroblastica* [*Acta Haematol* 1961; 26: 194-9], which started from Heilmeyer's observations and was written in German.

Among many contributions, which cannot be analyzed in detail here, I want to mention the one by Eduardo Rocha (page 155). I met him in Madrid in 1996, when he was a President of *Asociación Española de Hematología y Hemoterapia* (AEHH). The AEHH was planning to launch a Spanish journal of hematology, and Eduardo Rocha had a board meeting to discuss this issue the same day I was in Madrid for a meeting on myelodysplastic syndromes. We met by chance, and in a typical Italian-Spanish conversation in which everybody spoke his own language, we developed the idea that *Haematologica* – the official organ of the Italian Society of Hematology – might become the official organ also of AEHH, and in perspective of other European hematological societies. Eduardo Rocha deserves merit for this initiative, but Professor Rozman had a crucial influence on the decision of the Spanish Association of Hematology and Hemotherapy to adopt *Haematologica* as its official organ as of January 1997. I am very grateful to Eduardo Rocha and Ciril Rozman for that, and all European hematologists should recognize that the Official Organ of the European Hematology Association stemmed from this Italian-Spanish joint venture.

In summary, the life of Ciril Rozman might be the



The European venture of *Haematologica* started as an Italian-Spanish joint venture.

subject of a novel that deals with many European countries and languages (Slovenian, German, Italian, Catalan, Spanish, English – at least). On the whole, Professor Rozman, José Carreras, and the José Carreras International Leukemia Foundation represent superb paradigms of the European culture. The European Hematology Association acknowledged these paradigms, and the José Carreras lecture is indeed one of the top events of its annual meeting.

You won your challenge, Professor Rozman!

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