Giovanni B. Agus

Veins
The eloquence of symbols
Dedicated to my four sons

The dance along the artery
the circulation of the lymph
are figured in the drift of stars
ascend to summer in the [venous] tree

Thomas S. Eliot, Four Quartets
Foreword

Fifteen years of Acta Phlebologica (2000-2015) represent the renaissance and continuity of Italian phlebology. Acta Phlebologica, the official journal of the Italian College of Phlebology, promotes phlebological culture in Italy and internationally, given the choice of the English language.

For ten years the new series has presented front cover images and an introductory section in each issue consisting of the “eloquence of symbols” masterfully curated by Prof. Giambattista Agus.

Why this section?
Because symbolism is very frequent in medicine and, particularly in phlebology, where everything present must be recognised and classified.

The symbolic figures, which need to be a medium for recognising something, presuppose the creation of specific languages. The figure of a symbol can, however, be uprooted from its context, emptied of its meanings and then simplified or graphically varied according to the specific creative processes. This is where the work of Giambattista Agus comes in. Starting from a different symbol each time, he has known how to create the connection between art and ars medica and specific phlebological knowledge along a path which sees these ten-years gathered into this prestigious volume.

The book, which is published by the same editor of Acta Phlebologica, Minerva Medica, brings together information and phlebological discussion with significant artistic representations. To all appearances, it has to do with a traditional collection of texts already published. Instead, what actually emerges is a short phlebological dissertation which follows a logical anatomical-physiological-pathological-therapeutic thread, lingering on the protagonists of this long history; all the more because the texts have been reviewed and enriched by the author.

About Acta Phlebologica I would venture to say: “its first 15 years”, because it will be a pleasure to continue to publish this magazine with this particular section which is always interesting and stimulatimg each time. This is because Giambattista has been able to wisely capture the bond between medicine, and phlebology in particular, from the sacred or profane, artistic or iconographic symbols, in a deep and precise analysis which enables the reader to acquire specific knowledge that has originated from a symbolism that is only apparently divorced from the scientific theme.

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Introduction

VEINS is become an immense topic. Books on this subject, rare in the past, often today fall to cover everything that is new or different in the field. So, I pondered in the last years for the journal Acta Phlebologica to point out some aspects starting from occasions and actuality.

The method derives from Edgar Wind thought about the elocution of symbols; but at the same time from the criteria of medical humanities.

The first. Wind is a famous iconologist specializing in the Renaissance era, and interdisciplinary art historian closely connected with his research in allegory and the use of pagan mythology during the 15th-16th centuries; and in his book of essays about studies in Humanist Art he argued that «in virtue of its obliquity, the symbol holds hidden suggestions that eludes or dissolves a simple and clear statement. For this very reason a metaphoric statement quite often is more precise. Moreover, metaphor is generally easier to remember because impresses the imagination». Wind fits no traditional academic classification and is one of the prime examples of the intellectual tradition of Warburg’s blend of mythological/psychological approach to art history (1). The second criteria are Medical humanities defined, according U.S. National Library of Medicine of National Institutes of Health, «The study of the intersection of medicine and humanistic disciplines such as philosophy, religion, literature, and the fine and performing arts». The humanities and arts provide insight into the human condition, suffering, personhood, our responsibility to each other, and offer a historical perspective on medical practice. Attention to literature and the arts helps to develop and nurture skills of observation, analysis, empathy, and self-reflection, skills that are essential for humane medical care (2). These two concepts characterize the cover paper of Acta Phlebologica the Official Journal of the Italian College of Phlebology since ten years. Evidently some papers have been written for occasional events, but here all reorganized in a coherent subject VEINS-centred, broadly to include an interdisciplinary field of humanities (history, philosophy, ethics and religion), social science (anthropology, psychology, sociology), and particularly the arts as literature, theater, film, visual arts, and music too, in view of their application to medical education and practice. On the other hand many doctors pay attention to the couple science-humanism (art). Well Gloviczki reasoned about this: “art has many connections with medicine, with our patients, and with our hospitals. Art objects humanize the environment, they have a healing power, and they provide diversion, inspiration, and enjoyment for our patients …” (3).

Over the centrality of the VEINS, “heparin” should be the central word. Effectively the discovery of heparin by McLean is an outstanding stage in the History of Medicine and 2016 will be a great moment of celebration of his centenary; as much for the prevention and treatment of the terrible venous thromboembolism, as evidently, heparin anticoagulation is central also in the practice of vascular surgery.

Contemporary protagonists of phlebology are often to be found in these writings, and couldn’t be otherwise, considering their own importance in the medical branch. So are clearly implied Gianni Belcaro, Claude Franceschi, Mihael Georgiev, Byung Boong Lee, Nick Morrison, Hugo Partsch, Michel Perrin, Eberhard Rabe, Stefano Ricci, Lorenzo Tessari, Paolo Zamboni and others as important. But if some cultural controversial issues are touched upon as are areas of uncertainty in which future developments are need, any way I avoid polemic discussion into the different options for varicose vein surgery. In a sense this is a book of service simply remembering or pointing out something about the correlation between culture and phlebology to absent-minded phlebologists; and last but not least this is a proposal of beautiful art images.
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Some text is based on catalogues from art exhibitions, all quoted.

I also like to remember Giovanni Testori’s lesson, poet and writer, dramatist, artist and art critic, that more and more often used medical terminology, above all “vascular”, in his art writings. They were almost surgical operations where he used to touch the sore points either of the body and mind or soul. Since I have used plenty of art language and terms inside “vascular” medical arguments, I hope they weren’t inopportune.

After all, the book is also a symbolic declaration of love to Milan.

Giovanni B. Agus
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I

Centrality of the veins
The tree of veins

Leonardo da Vinci’s portraying of the “man-of-veins” or the tree of veins (brown ink pen with watercolour on charcoal crayon, Windsor, Royal Library), should sooner or later appear on a scientific phlebological journal (Table 1). What more symbolic and coherent towards phlebology!

It is known that Leonardo commonly used to write from right to left and already starting from the caption of the albero venoso, “venous tree”, written in between the man’s legs and the “spiritual parts” next to the left shoulder (Taglia per mezzo cuore, fegato, polmone e i rognoni, acciò che tu possa interamente figurare l’albero delle vene or rather “Cut in between heart, liver, lungs and kidneys, so that you may interiorly figure the venous tree”), we can discover veins’ centrality in the human body.

It is known how, in centuries, the term “vein” has always been understood as the “blood vessel” and the artery as “air pipe”.

Leonardo quite surely well knew, and later demonstrated, the “real” bloodstream (1, 2). Therefore, it should be ascribed to his faith towards the Aristotelian vision concept and to the complete mindful to the Galenic idea of blood circulation, according to which natural fluids flowed inside veins transporting spiritual nourishment taking origin from the liver.

The “bloodless man”, in this Leonardsque figure that derives from a medieval tradition and directly from Leonardo in the Italian edition illustration of the Fasciculo de medicina of Ketham (Venice, 1494), is also the example of the vein known as Vein or Posterior Arch “of Leonardo”. It is quite often so called and indicated with expressive power and isn’t mistaken with the saphenous vein in the leg and means precision and holistic view.

Such a holistic vision of man leads Leonardo to figure, repeatedly and with insistence, the relation of the whole body between superficial and depth. This is a symbolic reading towards phlebology meant not to stop to the well-known, since antiquity, veins of the lower limbs, both visible and cause of several troubles.

Starting from the many vie d’acqua (waterways) and the circular shape of Milan, an unusual anatomy of the city derives from Leonardo as architect. He imagines the city of Milan as an anatomy, a vascular body (Figure in the text: Map of Milan in Codice Atlantico, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano). During Leonardo’s first stay in Milan (1482-1499), Lombardy was in fact a great source of learning for him. He passed from practical problems of hydraulics to large-scale projects and to the greatest of theoretical questions. Leonardo’s participation included an extraordinary contribution toward the understanding of water, not only a fascinating element in the aesthetic sense, but also an occasion for uniting together into an organic treatise all the cases and observations regarding its behavior and nature that he accumulated (3).

There were many small rivers that crossed the city, as Bonvesin de la Riva described in the thirteenth century (1288), “situated in a beautiful, rich, and fertile plain […] equidistant between two marvelous rivers, the Ticino and the Adda” (4).

“Before proceeding, first I will undertake some experiments”, noted Leonardo when he decided to apply himself to improving the hydraulic works. Among the canals of Milan, the one to which Leonardo dedicated the greatest attention was the Naviglio Grande (Grand Canal), which was constructed and extended to Milan between the second half of the twelfth century and the second half of the thirteenth century. “The Canal is worth 50 gold ducats, it produces 125 thousand ducats a year, and it is 40 miles long [71.4 km] and 20 braccia wide [11.9 m],” observed Leonardo, in synthesizing the economic and technical characteristics of the Canal, before developing his hydraulic notes on the quantities of water produced from the bocche (mouths). Closed within its circle of canals, Milan used the defensive moat system, constructed between 1157 and 1158, to irrigate fields, for the movement of hydraulic wheels, and for navigation. At the time Leonardo arrived in Milan, the moat was in the process of changing into a circular port, a commercial channel for use between the city and the outer suburbs.

This duchy’s waterway system, with its small ports and its depots – like the human body with nutritional vessels and with venous and lymphatic return for the trash –, permitted Milan to receive
at low cost the various goods and materials in arrival: grain and every kind of foods ("Afluunt ad civitatem, veluti ad omnium temporalium bonorum sentinam, panis et vinum et boni saporis cuilibet generis carnes quadrupedum". Per non dire "segale, panisco, miglio, ceci, taglioli e cicerchie, rape e navoni che piacciono ai ricchi e ai poveri. E poi la frutta: prugne bianche, rosse, gialle e damaschine, pere e mele estive, more e moroni, fichi fioroni, nocciole e corniole, e noci, noci, noci, e castagne, a perdita d’occhio. Sessanta carri pieni di ciliegie, che ogni giorno entravano per le porte e le pusterle di Milano")

Leonardo made observations and surveys relating to the water vessels on the canals: "The largest boats made are 7 1/2 braccia wide [4.5 m] and 42 braccia long [25 m], with sides 11/2 braccia high [0.9 m]."

Leonardo so drew a suggestive map of the city. For the very first time, the tract of the Martesana canal between Porta Nuova and Piazza San Marco appeared on the map of Milan. Milan’s closely-knit network of canals and locks provided energy for its many hydraulic wheels, which contributed to making its production system of the fifteenth century one of the most highly developed in Europe. Leonardo made also notations regarding the city gates of Milan, with indications of their distances from the Strada Nova and the Porta Cumana.

The notations included the Martesana Canal. Leonardo did not limit his interests to indicating the new connection between the Martesana Canal and the moats of Milan in his city map. In fact, he pointed out the necessity of extending the Canal to the ring, suggesting also the way...
to realize the work, with private financing, and that the work would be finally ceded to the duchy: “So, Sir, there are many gentlemen who will arrange among themselves to provide for the intervention regarding the waters, and a mill over the Canals; and when their financing shall have been repaid them, they will deliver the Canal of Martesana” (Codex Leicester, f. 15 r.) (3). The lower part of the folio with the map studied as a vascular body – the human microcosm, anatomy for the close link with the perspective for the far – presents a suggestive aerial view of the city, showing the main buildings. Among these, we see the Castello Sforzesco and the cathedral, under construction. The boats in the waterways needed to be solid in order to be able to transport the precious Candoglia marble used for the cathedral. The marble arrived from Lago Maggiore via water, until Laghetto di Santo Stefano, where it was then unloaded using a special winch called a “falcone”. The boats were also equipped with a special “oar-rudder” that was well fixed onto the structure.
The point of view of the horse: the saphena-evident

In medicine and therefore also in phlebology, a precise iconographic analysis of art works may reserve surprises. Moreover, the symbolic value is out of discussion where “symbol” has a common derivation with another vascular key-word: embolus.

Symbol (syn-ballein, in ancient Greek) means put or keep together; and embolism (en-ballein) to put inside, introduce, wedge. The etymology is curiously for the same diabolic event (dià-ballein), to throw-away, to discard; or on the contrary in the Gospel parable (para-ballein), comparison, similitude.

As second symbolic illustration, so to “keep together” phlebology, we may choose the most common vein within clinical practice: the great saphenous vein. Its “visibility” is here painted with extreme veridicity showing Paul’s holster limb. It seems as though it is being aimed upon while falling off horse-back along the way to Damascus (Caravaggio, 1601, oil paint. Rome, S. Maria del Popolo, Cerasi chapel) (Table 2).

After the Greek definition (σαφηνος, safenes), meaning “visible or manifest” because present at the inner-side of the ankle (5), great saphenous vein in this part corresponds to same vein for the Roman physicians that called this vena ad malleolos. As we know the first doctor to use the term sahena was Abū ‘Ali al-Husayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sinā, latinized in Avicenna, in his Canon of Medicine, Liber I, Doctr. 5, Summa 5.5. For this reason the saphenous vein had a more recently semantic interpretation with an Arabic root (el safín or “the concealed”) translating its meaning into “hidden” (6).

We instead prefer remembering Glauco Bassi’s lesson with the Greek etymology and evidence of the saphenous vein, surely not a deep vein even if its deep position and fascial covering. The saphenous vein in the leg as superficial vein is so close to representations of great timeless Artists among which Caravaggio and Leonardo, and many others.

For the masterpiece of Michelangelo Merisi, “Caravaggio”, literally we can say “the point of view of the horse” (7) that revolutionary look at Saint Paul and at the evident saphenous vein.
Caravaggio, *Conversion of Saint Paul*, 1601, oil paint
(Cerasi chapel, Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome).
The paradox of definitions in modern phlebology

In ancient Egypt, eye make-up was a common habit for both women and men. This attitude, was firstly obtained with use of malachite (a light green colour obtained from copper oxide), and secondly from kohl (a sort of eye drops prepared from galena, a black lead mineral that protects from the sun, wind and sand) (8).

The Egyptian eye is even more linked to medicine with the “RX” symbol which is both used by pharmacies and in medicine and that has its origins in the eye of Horus represented as the falcon-headed god. The eye of Horus was believed to enclose healing and protective power, and it was used as a protective amulet (Table 3). A myth tells us that during the war between Horus and the god Seth, usurper of Osiris’ throne, Horus’ father, an eye was torn away from the latter. Since he was healed by the god Thot, the falcon’s eye and pronounced udjat by the Egyptians, became symbol of health and integrity. The symbol was divided into six parts, representing the shattering of Horus’ eye into six pieces. Each piece was associated with one of the six senses and a specific fraction, the missing piece (1/64), represented the fact that perfection was not possible.

Today this appearance is widely known in phlebology as the “saphenous [Egyptian] eye” to indicate the great saphenous vein (GSV) lies within a fascial compartment which can easily be identified on the B-mode transverse ultrasound image.

Bailly was the first to describe the “eye sign” to identify the GSV in the thigh by ultrasound (9) in the slender neurovascular area enclosed by the muscular and saphenous fasciae which join tightly both anteriorly and posteriorly to the vein that has been called the “saphenous compartment” by Caggiati and Ricci (10).

Anatomy of the venous system forms the basis of clinical phlebology and is crucial to the correct evaluation and appropriate treatment of venous disorders.

The UIP developed an International interdisciplinary consensus document in which the names of some veins were changed, particularly eponyms, which are not part of the official anatomical terminology, and for the most part excluded with only a few well-known names retained (11). This is strange for the value of history of the medicine as an interesting book about eponyms in phlebology published during the same year by Eberhard Rabe shows (12).

Even worse, during groin scan examination, using a transverse view to identify the GSV and the common femoral vein, both lying medially to the common femoral artery, the use of the “Mickey Mouse” sign (for example if the junction is not present after surgery to remove the GSV, then “Mickey’s” medial ear is missing) is paradoxical (13).

This can’t be compared with respect to noble definitions of the vein known as Leonardo’s vein or posterior arch vein and now defined posterior accessory great saphenous vein. It is quite often so-called and indicated with expressive power and isn’t mistaken with the saphenous vein in the leg and means precision and holistic view (1).

Even more, must we forget phlebology fathers such as Bassi, Cockett, Dodd, May and others, all the time connected to anatomy, syndromes or techniques for the veins’ pathology?
Table 3

The Egyptian eye of Horus
(Museum Archaeology, The Egyptian Museum, Florence).
The three ages of the woman

There are more logical terms that link in exemplary way the two concepts The eloquence of symbols and Medical humanities. Haven’t some values, such as birth, life, love and life, health and death, become of vital interest to the modern society?

Medicine totally concerns with nature, and “from lex naturalis are born mandatory and fundamental ethical rights such as respect for human life, liberty, justice and solidarity. The natural law is the only real defence against the will of power and ideological betrayal”(14).

By chance, are we still not in a moment where men cross “forests of symbols” (C. Baudelaire) or see the world as a “forest of signs” (R.M. Rilke)?

A singular exhibition during the 2007 kept at the “Palazzo dei Diamanti” in Ferrara “Symbolism, from Moreau to Gauguin and to Klimt”, confirms the great actuality of symbolic meanings. Let us choose Gustav Klimt’s famous “The three ages of the woman”, 1905 (Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, Roma) (Table 4) where linearity and decorative preciousness melt with highly realistic figurative elements; symbolic aestheticism but also symbol of women’s different life phases.

Regarding this only in recent time Michel Perrin has well evidenced the links of chronic venous insufficiency with women’s different life ages (15).

Here follow just a quick mention.

1) From birth to puberty, characterized precocious venous refluxes, without gender differences.
2) From puberty to menopause with venous dilatation during the luteal period of menstrual phase, poor contraceptive pill influence, significant pregnancy pathophysiologic role.
3) From menopause to the end of the third age with little hormonal substitutive therapy influence.

Life has now proceeded with the “old old” between 75 and 85 years of age and the “oldest old” over 85 (16) and so Perrin has correctly added the fourth age, that is more common in women than in men, with progression of chronic venous insufficiency and subsequent important and highly reducing quality of life symptoms and signs and also elevating complication risks in this population.
Table 4

Gustav Klimt, *The three ages of the woman*, 1905
(The National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome)
Legs. From formal art to Basquiat

Is Phlebology only medicine of the legs? A part of Paget-Schroetter syndrome, or Cockett-May-Turner syndrome, or for few other venous localizations, maybe yes.

The history of art shows veins in every part of the body, but above all in the legs. The well evident saphenous veins (vein that appears: Greek safenes means visible or manifest) are in very large number of sculptures, drawings and paintings.

Not today. When artists in the 19th century approached the task of depicting the world’s “true essence”, painting pursued two different paths. Those painters who felt that truth was perceived by the senses resorted to recent scientific discoveries to reproduce nature as the eye sees it. On the other hand, those who thought the answer was spiritual tried to point to a hidden truth concealed behind visible matter, a trend that gave birth to a less naturalistic form of art.

Anyway, art communication – symbols, signs, images, and colours on a flat surface, or in the air for sculptures – is one of the oldest and richest of human inventions, like writing or music.

Jean-Michel Basquiat’s paintings quite often represent legs and feet within a sculptural style where the veins no longer appear. His communicative instinct regards vehemence and restlessness. In the year in which he would have been fifty of age and many Institutions celebrate him with exhibitions, as Milan did in 2006 (17), we remember him as an icon (Table 5). Like it or not, “few modern myths about art have been as persistent or annoying as the so-called death of painting: unless, of course, it is the belief that abstract and representational paintings are oil and water, never to meet as one. The two notions are related. The Modernist insistence on the separation of representation and abstraction robbed painting of essential vitality. Both notions have their well-known advocates” (18).

Back to veins: legs’ pathology only or more, of the whole body?

In the arm the basilica and cephalic veins of the upper limbs have certainly less pathologic interest in comparison with the lower hemi body, but other scientific contributes sometimes present in the papers of Acta Phlebologica like jugular veins by S. Prakash et Al or facial vein by M.M. Pai et Al, should take to adequate attention towards veins of the head. Similarly are doing other papers in the Journal regarding other multiple locations (hand’s palm, azygos venous system, thoracic venous net or Mondor’s disease and others more).

Finally, the hypothetical nowadays called chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI) by the Big Idea of Paolo Zamboni opens a new panorama (19). These recent discoveries of abnormal venous out flow from the brain and spinal cord, and also of pathologic iron storage within cerebral parenchyma in multiple sclerosis patients, and that these patients exhibit significant stenoses in extracranial veins that drain the central nervous system (the internal jugular veins and the azygous vein) and that these venous strictures are associated with significant pressure gradients measured across a stenosis (20), show a new body-part of interest for Phlebology (not only for Neurology).
Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled*, acriilic, oilstick and spray paint on canvas.
Legs and aesthetic phlebology

Legs, health and beauty are undoubtedly joined. "Creatively, personally, professionally, I am absolutely consumed with its. How to dress the leg, how to elongate it. How to shape it, how to minimize it, how to create a leg that goes on forever. As a designer, the leg is my challenge, the starting point for every collection I design. Once I resolve what I’m going to do with it, I know where I’m going with the rest" (21). Like that an influential voice on the legs: “In so many ways a woman’s legs are her calling card. They immediately separate her from the men” (Table 6).

This quotation is true for the phlebologist too: the legs are a challenge for aesthetic phlebology. As is well known aesthetic medicine allows us to act gently and early, just as the first signs of ageing start to appear, and aesthetic phlebology is the field of medicine concerned with the prevention and the removal of varicose veins or telangiectasies for cosmetic reasons, using procedures such as sclerotherapy to eliminate the appearance of these veins. In many cases phlebology needs varicose vein surgical removal or today endovenous laser ablation Robert Muller was used to remind of the ambulatory phlebectomy for varicose veins and venules “also making prettier, in the meanwhile, phlebopathic legs of all ages.”

Probably the aesthetic phlebology started during the Congress “Firenze Beauty” in 1986 under the presidency of Prof. Emiliano Panconesi and the famous stylist Emilio Pucci. In this occasion the Italian phlebologist Gian Camillo Donadi defined “the aesthetic phlebology isn’t a other medicine but is only the phlebology that employs precise and well known methods that are aimed to both recover health and beauty of the legs. I believe that every aesthetic act isn’t and should never be a lessening or, even worse, a degradation of the medical act but, better still, should represent its sublimation” (22).

Varicose veins, venules and telangiectasies of the lower limbs are extremely common. Venules and telangiectasies do not develop into varicose veins if there is no underlying venous chronic disease, but they do still have a tendency to grow outwards as time goes by, thus becoming increasingly visible and unsightly (23). They can only sometimes cause a feeling of heaviness in the legs, cramps or edemas. Since varicose veins are mainly due to heredity, it is very difficult to avoid getting them. However, steps can be taken to prevent or reduce their appearance, for example, activities improving circulation – such as walking, cycling, yoga or other exercises –; wearing comfortable shoes; keeping a healthy weight; elevating the legs when resting; avoiding hot baths and showers, tight pants and belts, hot waxing; and massaging the upper legs. It is highly recommended to wear support stockings for pain relief associated with varicose veins or to delay their development. Nowadays, treatment of varicose veins is modern and safe, with excellent results. Regular follow-up permits better living without discomfort, while maintaining attractive legs.

Elastic stockings are one of the milestones of phlebology and beauty. “A woman’s legs are her foundation, they ground her soul. Her legs determine how she stands, how she carries herself and by association, how the clothes look. It doesn’t matter how great a design is if a woman doesn’t know what to put on her legs. The first thing I did when I opened my company was to put black hosiery in dressing rooms wherever my clothes were sold. Once a woman had on her black tights, she could try on anything; she felt good about her legs” (21). The power of hosiery can’t be underestimated. We can conclude agreeably.

Marlen Dietrich in The blue angel by Josef von Sternberg (1930), Claudette Colbert with Clark Gable in It Happened One Night by Frank Capra (1934), Anne Bancroft with Dustin Hoffman in The Graduate by Mike Nichols (1967), are only few spectacular examples of the cinema imagination regarding the relationship between legs and stockings.
Table 6

Guðrún Öyahals, Legs. *The ideal couple*  
(Collection G.B.A.)
“Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein …”

The Shakespearean “Thou troublest me; I am not in the vein…”, to think it over, is only one of the many possible literary refrains that recall venous circulation. To be not in vein means also for Richard III who says “Sure! So smile and, smiling, kill” [24, 25] (Table 7).

The blood in the veins circulates as a matter of fact in the collective imagination and so many examples could be made, starting from popular proverbs, or nowadays marketing, till upper literature. Therefore, it is for the enjoyment of this part of book that we will do so. So, if “have blood in your veins” is an intention of “having the guts” or generosity “if you have blood in the veins then donate it” [as Polyclinic Hospital in Milan University suggests]. The exact contrary, “of frozen blood in the veins”, on the other hand is a meaning of fear, terror. Or, entering into the Literature: «1931: Moi aussi, j’ai été jeune, Lulitchka. Il y a longtemps de cela, mais je me rappelle encore le jeune sang brûlant dans les veines. Crois-tu que cela s’oublie?» «1935: Je ne puis pas changer mon corps, éteindre ce feu qui brûle dans mon sang» [26]. In an Italian literature masterpiece – The Gattopardo [serval] –, the veins have grown in varicous veins in the beautiful protagonist Angelica: Palermo, may 1910, «Angelica soffriva di vene varicose, e le sue gambe la sostenevano male e veniva su appoggiata al braccio del proprio servitore il cui lungo pastrano nero spazzava, salendo, gli scalini» [27]. Or in a other Italian novel: «Caro Michele, …vado al botteghino, ascolto la signora Peroni che si lamenta di vene varicose e di artrite, sfoglio i registri dei conti …»[28]. Much more dramatic – in the Primo Levi’s masterpiece If This Is a Man [United States title: Survival in Auschwitz] –, is to have varicose veins in a Lager for the “Selekcja”, hybrid Latin and Polish word for selection: «È assurdo che Wertheimer sperì: dimostra sessant’anni, ha enormi varici… Né si creda che le scarpe, nella vita del Lager, costituiscono un fattore d’importanza secondaria. La morte incomincia dalle scarpe: esse si sono rivelate, per la maggior parte di noi, veri amesi di tortura, che dopo poche ore di marcia davano luogo a piaghe dolorose che fatalmente si infettavano. Chi ne è colpito, è costretto a camminare come se avesse una palla al piede i suoi piedi si gonfiano, e più si gonfiano, più l’atroto con il legno e la tela delle scarpe diventa insopportabile. Allora non resta che l’ospedale: ma entrare in ospedale con la diagnosi di dicie Füsse (edema) è estremamente pericoloso, perché di questo male, qui, non si può guarire»[29]. A Literary page undoubtly lighter and protruded towards hope: «In certi balconi [a Cagliari] su per le strade ripide di Castello fiorivano il basilico e la menta, altri erano rossi per i gerani. Delle signore, con le gambe grosse e le vene varicose, stavano affacciate a quei balconi, e lei si chiedeva se desiderassero di morire, così povere e malsene com’erano. Invece coltivavano la menta e il basilico e i gerani rossi» (30).

Of course, the play upon international citations is open. On this literature’s eloquence of symbols every World literature can contribute.

We conclude with poetry in music:

Ora alzatevi spose bambine che è venuto il tempo di andar con le vene celesti dei polsi anche oggi si va a cantare [Fabrizio De Andrè Khorakhané, da Anime salve, 1996]

Wacht auf, ihr Adern und ihr Glieder, Und singt dergleichen Freudenlieder, Die unserm Gott gefällig sein [Bach Kantaten Bwv 110 “Unser Mund sei voll Lachens”. Weihnachten 1725 (for Christmas: Awaken, you veins and limbs, and sing such songs of joy that are pleasing to our God; per il giorno di Natale: Svegliatevi, vene e membra, e cantate inni di gioia che possano riuscire graditi al nostro Dio)].