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journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/tacc](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/tacc)Flavia Petrini: *Wonder Woman* of Airway Management

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In the beginning of the 40s, an American psychologist, Dr. William Moulton Marston, was asked from the press company National (lately named DC comics) to analyze their comics production to find out opportunities for improvement and new developments.

As a feminism theorist, and as an acute psychologist, Moulton Marston stated that *the best way to give back valor to women's qualities is to create a feminine character combining Superman powers plus appeal of a beautiful and good woman*. Through the pencil of Harry G. Peters, in 1942 this idea became the DC Comics evergreen character of *Wonder Woman*, which you could still find today on the bookshelves of comics sellers.

Princess Diane, alias Wonder Woman, was born from Aphrodite in the kingdom of Amazons, on the mythological Paradise island. She trained there as a warrior and left to go and help human beings during second world war in the name of love for an American pilot.

Flavia Petrini wasn't born from a goddess but from normal special parents, not in Paradise Island but in Forlì, close to Bologna on a warm July day. It would have been much more romantic if she had been born on a Greek island, as princess Diane, nevertheless she loves Greek islands so much that they are one of her preferred destinations for holidays (probably, less romantically, because there is poor internet connection there and she can turn off her mobile phone!).

By the way, starting from the amazing amount of black curly hair, she has many points in common with Princess Diane – *Wonder Woman* (see Fig. 1).

After her graduation as a Doctor in Medicine in 1983 at the historic and prestigious University of Bologna, she quickly became a Specialist in Anesthesia and Intensive Care. She started working there as an assistant and researcher in the early 2000s under the guidance and mentorship of Professor Cetrullo first (who unveiled her secrets of newborn airway endoscopy) and later for Professor Martinelli. Under his guidance and advice, she became Associate Professor in 2002 and Full Professor in Anesthesia and Intensive Care in 2006, when she had already moved to Chieti-Pescara University.

Acting as a modern *Wonder Woman*, she had to face all the difficulties of an academic career, plus being a woman in a world which was not yet so used to women acting and working as hard (if not more) and as good (if not better) as men. She eventually

succeeded to put together her academic work and intense research activity with her personal life, which could not exclude her friendships, her Riviera Romagnola and an inherited passion for fashion and elegance. Yet today, during a break in congress somewhere in the world, you could find her sneaking hidden shops and markets in search for vintage *haute couture* woman accessories, shoes and bags being her primitive passion.

Because might she be wonder, but she is Woman first.

As *Wonder Woman*, she covered important positions in the national Anesthesia society (SIAARTI), being Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Delegate, Counselor and today President elect for the 2018–2021 period. She was keeping an eye in Italy and an eye abroad, participating and escalating important positions in many international societies in the Discipline (including SITI, PAMIA, ISSIH, ESICM and so on). Her years in Chieti-Pescara University were hard, as she had to lead by hand a large and clinically very active reality (she is today heading the Department of “Medicina Perioperatoria, Terapia del Dolore, Emergenze Intraospedaliere e Terapia Intensiva – MPTDEITI” with a large number of anaesthetists) in the decennium of Helsinki Declaration [1], on which she worked actively as part of European Society of Anaesthesiologists Board, Council and Subcommittees. She was prophet of simulation in Medicine, of patients' safety and quality and risk management *ante litteram*, and she is yet so active in this field, including last efforts resulting in leading the SIAARTI Obesity task force and co-authoring an impressive interdisciplinary consensus for perioperative management of obese patients [2].

In between she was (and is) devoted to training as very active national delegate for NASC (National Anaesthesiologists Societies Committee), and member of UEMS/EBA subcommittee EBA:CME – CPD; Education and Training [3,4], while being Professor in Chieti-Pescara University, in post-graduate Masters and other important Italian universities. And on the wave of such an enthusiasm, she found energy to sustain a huge workload behind the many guidelines and the large amount of indexed papers, chapters in books, multimedia and researches she coauthored [5–8].

But her first professional love, thanks to the pathway drawn by Professor Cetrullo and Professor Martinelli, was airway management. She was a member of SIAARTI Task Force for the Airway Management research group, which she eventually led for a three year period before becoming also president of the European Airway Management Society. Foreseeing new challenges (such as Sleep Apnea patients [9], extended supraglottic airway devices use [10] and airway management in ICU) and never taking hands off the

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**Fig. 1.** (Top) Original 1942 DC comics strip for Wonder Woman (reproduced from <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/jidw-dc-team-wonder-woman-714602>). (Low left panel) A young Flavia Petrini on Italian beach (unfortunately no Paradise island). Flavia Petrini today during official European Society of Anaesthesiologists ceremony (low right panel).

tables of workshops, congresses, and last but not least, patients. She was one of the first (wonder) women handling and teaching fiberoptic bronchoscope following the steps of Prof Giulio Frova, Prof Simonetta Baroncini and Dr Arturo Guarino (her mentors and still very active teachers) and extending this teaching, enthusiasm and heritage to new fellows such as Dr Guido Merli, Dr Ida Di Giacinto (members of SIAARTI Airway Management Research Group), and myself, which I am today covering her previous role as National Coordinator of SIAARTI Airway Management Research Group.

What I am today, as a doctor, teacher, airway enthusiast and man, I mostly owe to this group of people, which taught me first to be a good man before being anything else, through their efforts, fatigue, discipline, sense of duty and honor. I am proud of being their friend before being the one who is taking their seeds to spread

them wider and wider in the field of airway management.

And many things I learnt from Flavia Petrini – *Wonder Woman*, most of which I learnt from her recalls and reproaches. Just acting like a (slightly) older sister (remember she is Woman before Wonder!) who was always there to call me back to duty, firmly shouting at me but with a silent caress, addressing me to new (often harder) challenges and aiming me to (often higher) new peaks. I could bet in couple of long calls or face-to-face discussions we might have had both wish to choke each other (knowing we could easily have rescued our respective airways) but being ready, no more than three minutes later, to sit down and put on paper new ideas, perspectives and goals to reach. This way I appreciated and learnt the importance of looking for new enthusiastic colleagues and to make them your strength rather than the nightmare of being obscured from them. And for sure I learnt from her how to be clear

in my decisions and aims, direct in my talks and sincere with everyone, but above all with people you consider real friends, because this acting will make them closer and more important friends than they were already.

And I must admit I also learnt that it is much better to have Wonder Woman as your friend and ally and not as your enemy, because for kind, peaceful and respectful she knows to be, you must never forget her superpowers.

I am proud and honored to be Flavia Petrini's friend and coworker, and lucky to have met the real *Wonder Woman* in Anesthesia. It is my pleasure to write these lines to address her for the European Airway Management Society MacEwen award that she will be given in Berlin, October 2017, during 4th European Airway Congress.

This award is fully deserved and represents the recognition for her unstoppable activity, undeniable results, tireless enthusiasm, intellectual honesty and devotion to the Discipline [11].

Might you be as strong as Superman, but being a woman takes some disadvantages: it is not so common yet to find the same recognition for men and women, and this awards also changes the rule, being Flavia the first woman receiving such an achievement. For sure it was not easy, for sure it did request waiver and sacrifice, as the real Wonder Woman used to say in her war cry: *Being a cute superhero AND a woman is exhausting!*

But Flavia Petrini, more than Wonder woman, is unstoppable!  
Ad Maiora!

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None.

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