

## Recollections of Paolo Salmon

I first met Paolo Salmon when he was in Boston during the 1969-1970 academic year. At his invitation, I visited Genova for a semester in 1977. While I was there, we decided to study Golod homomorphisms as a topic of mutual interest. The following year, after back and forth correspondence, we wrote *On a class of Golod homomorphisms*, which appeared in 1980.

Although I do not know all of Paolo's mathematical work, my impression based on the part with which I am familiar is that he always tried to approach a problem by first using calculations made from computable examples. The problems he chose were interesting and pertinent. Invariably, or so it seems to me, the problems involved matrices. Such was the case in our joint work where his matrix calculations mirrored and often led to more general homological explanations. The same was true in some of his earlier work, such as in *Sulla fattorialità delle algebre graduate e degli anelli locale*, where he independently and at the same time as Burch (ca. 1968) proved the so-called Hilbert-Burch theorem. A quick application of that result within the area of our then mutual interest was that for an ideal  $I$  contained in the square of the maximal ideal of a regular local ring of dimension 2,  $R/I$  is either a complete intersection or a Golod ring. Later on, in the 1990s and early 2000s, Paolo pursued other interests and collaborated with Rahim Zaare-Nahandi in articles that focused on analytically irreducible triple points, and on ideals of minors defining generic singularities. Gröbner bases and catalecticant matrices figured in those studies.

Over the years, I have spoken with Paolo about many mathematical and non-mathematical subjects. When it came to a discussion of the development of commutative algebra in Italy, he was always most proud of the accomplishments of his (then) younger colleagues, some of whom are speaking at this Bologna meeting. To me, he seemed to absorb new ideas and methods from everywhere and then successfully transplant them to Italian soil, where they took vigorous root.

In a non-mathematical context he was, on the one hand, a serious and passionate defender of the academic ideals that he upheld and embodied, lending special support to the work of students and new researchers. On the other hand, he could get right down and play in the most natural way with little children, both to his delight and theirs. He had a passionate interest in music and the fine arts, and certainly, also, in food. Paolo and his wife Gioia were genuine people who were a pleasure to be with. Their stances and opinions were always forthright, and whether you agreed or not with this or that position, you always knew where each of them stood and how they had got there. Both Paolo and Gioia are now very much missed.

Eugene Gover, Boston, MA, USA, March 2019