

## GUEST EDITORS' NOTE

Dear readers,

This issue was inspired by the realization that historians of science in Brazil have paid scant attention to the history of our oceans and to policies about them. Which is not to say that oceans and seas have not traversed the fields of history, politics, and scientific research in Brazil, in its neighboring countries, or in Portugal, as illustrated by the articles presented in this volume.

Oceanic research became firmly established worldwide at the turn of the twentieth century, with the exploratory voyages of the British Challenger and the German Gazelle. Around the same time, the field was institutionalized through “infrastructural experiments” – to borrow the words of Robert Kohler in his *Landscapes and labs* – starting with the 1872 foundation of the eminent Stazione Zoologica in Naples and followed by other initiatives, like the Biologischen Anstalt Helgoland, a model endeavor that in 1892 blended research, instruction in marine biology, and the fishing industry. An entire generation frequented these spaces of knowledge and power; one representative was Hermann von Ihering, who was thus able to produce the first and last of the countless studies that grounded his histories of the origins of the Atlantic Ocean, discussed in these pages by Maria Margaret Lopes and Irina Podgorny. These spaces also gave rise to a new tradition in training, research, and the shaping of international policy, as demonstrated by the studies of Helen Rozwadowski in *The sea knows no boundaries*. The Portuguese re-created models and founded marine laboratories, which is where Maria Fernanda Rollo, Maria Inês Queiroz, and Tiago Brandão begin what is a historical approach to the analysis of oceanography, from its role as a strategic option in the national science policy adopted by Portugal's Estado Novo, through the growing technical and scientific complexity of the field as of the 1970s. Interests in marine space brought commercial sea fishing together with ichthyological research in Argentina at the turn of the twentieth century, according to Susana García, who examines the ways naturalists have worked to compile and process fishermen's observations and empirical experiences. Another space where innovative research was fortified and where the field gained power – won by women too – was the Oceanographic Institute of the University of São Paulo, whose process of institutionalization is addressed by Alex Gonçalves Varela, with a focus on 1940s Brazil.

Covering a broad span of time, the articles in this issue investigate knowledge production, navigation instruments, mythological sea creatures, controversial historical figures, exploratory journeys, the appropriation of resources, geopolitical interests, and institutions. Following

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the astrolabes and texts of Portuguese cosmographers from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries – the topic taken up by Heloisa Gesteira – these studies travel through time until reaching the specialized electronic search tools that Gilberto Menezes Amado Filho and Leila de Lourdes Longo use to sketch the current panorama of benthic marine fauna biodiversity in Brazil, along with future prospects in the field. The articles have not overlooked legends of sea monsters, some of which have been cemented and classified by scientific practices, explored herein by Rodrigo Salvador and Barbara Tomotani in the case of the legendary Kraken, transformed into a giant squid. These voyages of monsters and data, intermingled on tables and maps, lend themselves to discussions of Darwinian theory, field and collection practices, networks of correspondence, and the exchange of information, as is the case of Almir Leal de Oliveira’s analysis of John Casper Branner’s work (1899-1911) during the Stanford expeditions to Brazil. Gabriel Passetti, in his thoughts on the voyage of FitzRoy’s Beagle, investigates the training of the personnel that were needed for the expansion of empires, from the traditional perspective of the “imperial eye.” In the “Sources” section, Alda Heizer and Aline Cerqueira follow these journeys as well, discussing the role of Joséphine Schouteden-Wéry’s studies of the Belgian coast and colony of Congo and also delving deeper into the broad debate on the geological, climate, and hydrological factors that have governed the geographic distribution of species.

As spaces in between and as places of diversity and unexpected occurrences that serve a multitude of purposes – from recreational spot to stage for war and piracy, from repository of sacred offerings to site of scientific research, from shipwrecked immigrant to project for the preservation of biodiversity – our seas and oceans foster the production of images and collections, as well as new interpretations. The legitimacy of these representations and the technical means for revealing nearly inaccessible places to the human eye are found in Alejandro Martínez’ analyses of underwater photography and the limits of photographic visibility. The latter were activities enjoyed by the European royalty in the early twentieth century, as shown by Maria Estela Jardim and collaborators, who examine the penultimate Portuguese king’s interest in the sea and in amassing collections. This desire to represent the underwater world and render it visible also appears in Maurício de Mattos Salgado and Martha Marandino’s article on the proliferation of aquariums and the musealization of the sea, with all the attendant implications, including the question of keeping organisms alive in captivity. The same desire can be detected in Maria Margaret Lopes’ review of the award-winning book *História, pesquisa e biodiversidade do Monumento natural das Ilhas Cagarras*, where the reviewer points out how top-level experts in animals, plants, and mineral resources share the sea with fishermen, environmentalists, sports enthusiasts, tourists, commercial shipping, and divers, each with their own specific equipment, occupying the few protected meters around and on these islands that were previously “so close and so unknown.”

In short, as suggested by Susana García, the studies on the ocean that you find in these pages reflect a web of agents, institutions, facilities, apparatuses, and desires that vary in their priorities and interests and that are an open invitation to further research.

Alda Heizer  
Maria Margaret Lopes  
Susana García