

GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

We are celebrating. Not just because Christmas and the New Year are close, but also because of the launch of the new issue of *História, Ciências e Saúde – Manguinhos*. We have brought together papers written by researchers from institutions in Bahia and other states, all of which deal with the regional particularities of the history of science and health in Brazil.

Most of the articles were presented at the First Forum on the History of Science and Health: Historiographical Perspectives, held in the Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica da Bahia on 17 October 2006. Interest in the papers led the editors of the journal to invite us to organize a thematic number that would express the richness of local historiographical production in terms of themes, sources and methodologies.

At this moment the group responsible for the First Forum is promoting the second forum with equal success. The Second Forum was held in Salvador in December with 150 participants, which indicates the growth in the production of the history of science and health outside the usual Rio-São Paulo region.

Maria Renilda Nery Barreto is the author of "Assisted birth in 19th century Bahia" in which she tries to show how during that time there coexisted two obstetric cultures in Salvador: that of the doctors who drew on the technical and cognitive resources of their medical specialty, and that of the traditional midwives, whose knowledge was empirical and sensorial. Despite the efforts of doctors to win the confidence of Bahian families, midwives remained hegemonic in the art of 'assisting' in the birth of children and treating the illnesses of women. The author looks at the social and professional sectors that provided assistance at birth; the role of the Faculdade de Medicina da Bahia in the training and certification of midwives; and the roles of periodicals in the legitimation of doctors, revealing on the other hand the reduced participation of midwives in these vehicles of communication.

The article "Women, the press and hygiene: the medicalization of birth in Bahia (1910-1927)", by Marivaldo Cruz do Amaral, discusses the role of the lay press in the dissemination of the *hygienist* agenda in the Bahian capital. It looks especially at medicalized birth and at the new standards of attention for the female body and newborns in the Climério de Oliveira Maternity Hospital, which received the unconditional support of the press.

In "The Spanish flu epidemic: a challenge to Bahian medicine", Christiane Maria Cruz de Souza looks at the period when medical and health authorities were challenged to explain a disease which spread with unexpected virulence in the middle of uncertainties and controversies about the diagnosis and etiology of the flu. The author analyzes the positions of local doctors and the resources they used to explain the epidemic crisis and to recommend therapeutic and prophylactic measures.

Venetia Durando Braga Rios presents readers with an interesting analysis of case history instruments in the São João de Deus Asylum in Salvador (Bahia) from 1874, the year of its foundation. Her article is entitled "The 'Asylum', an 'undeniable' need in social organization: questions about the commitment questionnaire at the São João de Deus Asylum". The researcher located important documents for the understanding of asylum history and the history of psychiatry in the state in the Arquivo do Estado da Bahia and in Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Salvador. Approximately twenty questionnaires filled in by Bahian psychiatrists reveal both medical knowledge of madness and its treatment and ways of coping with daily asylum life.

In "Joanna de Sá: medicine, politics and morality in the pages of *O Monitor*", Vera Nathália Silva de Tarso also looks at the São João de Deus Asylum. She examines the tensions between Santa Casa da Misericórdia, the state and the press when the pregnancy and childbirth of the patient Joanna de Sá were reported in the newspaper *O Monitor*.

Tânia Salgado Pimenta and Ediná Alves Costa, authors of "Pharmaceutical practice in Bahia in the latter half of the 19th century", study the growing tendency to delimit the professions related to the art of curing in Brazil during the 1800s. They show that in academic medicine there was a progressive distinction between those who prescribed and those involved in the manufacture and sale of medicine, highlighting changes and continuities in the legislation in the relationships of pharmacists with authorities, doctors and those who illegally manufactured and sold unauthorized medicine.

Laura Carvalho dos Santos looks at “Antônio Moniz de Souza, the ‘Man of Brazilian Nature’: science and medicinal plants in the early 19th century”, in which she registers an intense movement of the investigation of nature regarding Brazilian flora. One of the principal objectives of the expeditions made at this time, mostly carried out by foreign travelers, was the mapping of species of economic value or which could be used in therapeutic practices. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the Bahian traveler Antônio Moniz de Souza went to various parts of Brazil to observe, catalogue and collect products from the three kingdoms of nature, especially medical plants.

In “Control of health risks in radiodiagnosis: a historical approach”, Marcus Vinicius Teixeira Navarro, Handerson Jorge Dourado Leite, Josemir da Cruz Alexandrino and Ediná Alves Costa look at the discovery of ionizing radiation, its biological risks and the consequent need to control the health risks it presents. In their analysis of the historical development of the control of radiodiagnosics risks in Brazil they show that this was associated not only with the dose received, but also with diagnostic errors and the problem of costs to the health system. The authors emphasize that health legislation involves multiple actors and a broad range of social co-responsibility.

“The Instituto de Matemática e Física at the Universidade da Bahia: mathematical activities (1960-1968)” is the title of the article by André Luís Mattedi Dias. Based on documentation found in the files of the institution and in the depositions of its professors, he analyzes the creating of a research and post-graduate center in the Universidade da Bahia during those turbulent years of Brazilian social and political history. The author emphasizes the interests, representations, articulations and conflicts involving the protagonists of the project: the authors and supporters of the project, including national mathematical leaders, tenured professors from the Escola Politécnica and the Faculdade de Filosofia who contested it, the students of these schools and other actors.

Juliano Moreira is the subject of an article by Ronaldo Ribeiro Jacobina and Ester Aida Gelman, “Juliano Moreira and the *Gazeta Medica da Bahia*”. In light of recent studies the authors revise the biography of the doctor from Bahia and examine with special attention the works he published between 1893 and 1903 in *Gazeta Medica da Bahia*, the journal that served as a vehicle for original research from the Bahian Tropicalist School (Escola Tropicalista Bahiana). Moreira’s contributions in that period were mostly in the areas of dermatology, syphilography, parasitology and neuropsychiatry.

In “Our mulattos are more exuberant”, Mariza Corrêa deals with another doctor from Maranhão, Raimundo Nina Rodrigues (1862-1906), whose centenary received special attention in *Gazeta Medica da Bahia*, as well as being marked by articles in various other journals. The author presents Nina Rodrigues’ translation of “Métissage, dégénérescence et crime”, an article he published in *Archives d’Anthropologie Criminelle* in 1899. In this edition of *História, Ciências Saúde – Manguinhos* the reader can find the Portuguese version (“Mestiçagem, degenerescência e crime” – Miscegenation, degeneracy, and crime) and the facsimile of such an interesting text, due both to the ethnography and his use of genealogies and case studies, innovative in Brazil at that time.

“Sources of interest to the history and culture of health: Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador”, by Maria Teresa Navarro de Britto Matos and Adriana Sousa Silva looks at the development of the Arquivo Histórico Municipal de Salvador, its current structure and its archive, emphasizing sources of interest to the history and culture of health.

Alex Gonçalves Varela’s research note deals with the work of the ‘professional metallurgist’ Manuel Ferreira da Câmara (1783-1820), whose profile brings together the roles of statesman and parliamentarian and the study of the natural sciences. His scientific memories are important witnesses to the richness of Luso-American enlightened thought at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

The papers presented in this edition of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* show that the history of sciences and health in Bahia is going ahead full steam, an image that is well suited to its capital, a baroque port with many traditions, including beautiful festivals. And so, dear readers, after finishing this journey through the serious part of Bahia, let us go and join in the festivities, wherever they may be, because this has been a productive year and the next one will be ever more so.

Maria Renilda Nery Barreto
Lina Maria Brandão de Aras