

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

We have come to the close of another gratifying year of work.

In addition to our journal's four regular issues – the last of which for 2010 you now hold in your hands – we put out two hefty supplements this year. Our July publication of “Cancer in the twentieth century: science, health, and society” was timed to coincide with the inauguration of an exhibit here in Brazil, while “Asylums and psychiatry in the First Republic: diagnoses from a historical perspective” was released this December at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro's Forum on Science and Culture, where our contributing authors discussed these issues with a highly engaged audience.

The journal held on to its A1 International ranking in History under the Qualis system, used by the federal research funding agency Capes to evaluate academic production at graduate studies programs. *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* occupies two periodical categories at the SciELO site: health sciences and human sciences. The breadth of our readers' and our contributors' interests is reflected in the diversity of the journal's Qualis-Capes classifications: A1 International in Education; A2 in Sociology, Social Service, and Letters/Linguistics; and other classifications in eighteen additional fields. Yet we are anchored in history, the foundation of our identity in the midst of so much interdisciplinary crossover.

The journal continues to receive a growing number of submissions. Within the realm of Brazilian scholarship, there is a clear trend towards co-authorship, evidently reflecting both Capes pressure on graduate studies programs as well as a generalized tendency within the human sciences for advisors to sign their doctoral students' articles as second authors.

Using Google Analytics, we can see a rise in the number of site visitors from Brazil and around the world. From July 26, 2007 through July 30, 2008, Google detected 277 hits from eight countries or territories. From August 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009, we received 15,699 hits from 47 countries or territories, with Brazil, Portugal, Mexico, Argentina, the United States, Spain, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Chile, and Germany holding the first ten spots. Hits totaled 13,547 from October 1, 2009 through October 1, 2010, while there was little change in the profile of accessing countries.

In 2006, our editors began selecting articles for translation into English. This decision recognized the fact that the journal's presence on the SciELO site affords a tremendous opportunity for greater visibility and readership but that to take full advantage of this opportunity, we would need to overcome the linguistic barrier of publishing in Portuguese. There are now 68 articles available in digital format in English, translated from either Portuguese or Spanish (the hard-copy journal publishes in the latter two languages only).

Three of the articles appearing in this issue are already out in English – which means that bilingual versions of these papers are available through the open-access, digital version of our journal at www.scielo.br/hcsm.

In “Girolamo Fracastoro and the invention of syphilis,” Virginia Iommi Echeverría, professor from the Pontifical Catholic University in Valparaíso, Chile, examines the Veronese physician's different views on the origin of syphilis. The author contrasts the well-known poem *Syphilidis sive de morbo gallico libri tres* (Three books on syphilis, or the French disease), published in Verona in 1530, with the prose treatise released two decades later under the title *De contagione et contagiosis morbis et eorum curatione libri tres* (Three books on contagion, contagious diseases, and their cure). Echeverría demonstrates how air is the vehicle of corruption and disease in the first, while in the

second Fracastoro suggests direct contagion as a new means of transmission, since air was no longer a menace even though the disease still hung on. Echeverría also shows that the ‘seeds’ associated with the transmission of syphilis do not fall outside the classic features of Hippocratism – contrary to what positivist historiography still contends today, that is, that Fracastoro was a forerunner of microbiologists.

In their article “Reading the ‘natural book’: notes towards a history of anatomical and surgical studies in Buenos Aires (1870-1895),” Pablo Souza and Diego Hurtado, of San Martín National University in Buenos Aires, analyze transformations in a realm of medicine that has received little attention from historians. By following the career of Ignacio Pirovano, who was professor of anatomy and *cirujano mayor* in Buenos Aires, the authors have studied the influence of European and especially Parisian surgical traditions, as well as the tensions between different ways of conveying knowledge within groups of doctors in the capitals of France and Argentina. As a vital actor in the valorization of Argentinean hospital medicine, Pirovano was the individual most responsible for introducing the practices of restorative and Listerian surgery to Argentina. The authors take a very original look at the relationship between this ‘native’ from the scientific periphery and one of his masters, Jules-Émile Péan, a surgeon who was disliked by the medical establishment in Paris and was given to operating in a dress suit at Hospital Saint Louis, charming numerous audiences with his dexterity, speed, and technical creativity.

Vivian da Silva Cunha, a doctoral candidate with the Graduate Program in the History of the Sciences and of Health at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation’s Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, signs “Isolated ‘like us’ or isolated ‘among us’?: the controversy within the National Academy of Medicine over compulsory isolation of leprosy sufferers.” This paper presents the facts that led to the 1920 creation of the Inspectorship for the Prevention of Leprosy and Venereal Diseases, which was part of the era’s reform of the Brazilian public health sector but also a response to the debates that transformed Hansen’s disease into a national problem to be addressed solely through mandatory isolation. Against this backdrop, Cunha offers her original analysis of the controversy between Belisário Penna, leader of the sanitation movement in the 1910s and director of the Rural Prophylaxis Service, and Eduardo Rabello, head of the Inspectorship, a renowned dermatologist and specialist in syphilis, and one of the founders of the Brazilian Society of Dermatology. At the heart of their dispute was the type of segregation to be enforced, more flexible in Rabello’s view and extremely harsh in the opinion of Penna. For Rabello, leprosy sufferers should be confined to some type of hospital – preferably an agricultural colony – or to their own homes, in this latter case only so long as the patient’s economic situation allowed him to adopt the necessary preventive measures. For Penna, the only safe way to avoid spreading the illness – which was itself a mark of semi-civilization – was to remove its carriers from the society in which they lived by building one or two cities where all lepers from the whole country over and from all social classes would be sent to live.

The fact that I have limited myself to mentioning only the three articles translated into English is in no way meant to belittle the other articles we offer our readers in this issue of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*. It is the monetary question alone that keeps us from publishing the entire journal in the language that remains the chief means of exchange within the international scientific community.

I write this letter on the date that heralds the official start of summer. From my perch here on the final edge of 2010, I spy you, my friend and reader, watching a new year dawn as you read these lines. I hope the time you spent between these two moments was one of joy and renewed energy, preparing you for this new cycle in our lives. May the coming months be filled with good health, great friendships, rewarding work, and happy days.

Jaime L. Benchimol
Editor