

Foreword

This issue of *Varia Historia* is dedicated to those who research the “history of history”, a branch of intellectual history or of the history of sciences or knowledge, which approaches the trajectory of historical knowledge in various ways: by analyzing the work of a particular historian or comparing historians from different times or schools; reconstructing from a critical perspective the historical thought of philosophers, sociologists, theologians, and anthropologists, comparing distinct historical analyses of lived experiences; reflecting on theoretical issues (temporality, the writing of history, memory, concepts); producing the history of the alliances made with other disciplines and the techniques employed by historians. Other terms are also used to designate this field of investigation: “historiography”, “metahistory”, “theory and methodology of history”, “history of historiography”.

Historical investigation achieves meaning only when it is historicized by the history of history, that is, when inserted in its temporal frame. The history of history shows historians that what they do today was already being done in the past in different ways, and explains why it was done so then and why it is done as it is today, thus denouncing those who feel that the contemporary way of doing history is the most truthful and only one. The present runs the risk of deception as it considers its view of history the most perfect one, since historical knowledge, when incontestable, is life in its frozen state.

The current issue starts with an article by the French professor François Hartog, the most important practitioner of the “history of history”, who offered a “gift” in the form of the article *Temporality and patrimony* to the journal of the Department of History at UFMG. His article discusses the redefinition of “memory” and “patrimony” within the new “regime of historicity” set in motion in the West after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). The discussion is centered on the question: is a new regime of historicity, one based on the present, taking shape? In the author’s view, the category of present has grown rather fast and imposed an omnipotent present, which he names “presentism”: it causes one to be torn between amnesia and the desire not to forget, and has affected the concept of “historical patrimony”.

The second article is by Norma Côrtes, professor of Theory of History at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, and is entitled *The strayings of method: notes on history and tradition in Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Reading Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, the article discusses historicity in epistemic attitude and scientific method, and explores some aspects concerning the "prudential statute" of historical knowledge, as advocated by Gadamer in his work.

Spaces of sociability in Portuguese America and contemporary Brazilian historiography, the third article, written by the historian and retired UFMG professor Caio Boschi, presents a comprehensive view of the academic-scientific production during the past two decades that investigates the "spaces of sociability in Portuguese America". The author compares works that investigate this topic and also alludes to historiographic gaps that call for further study.

The fourth article was sent to us by Prof. Valdei Lopes de Araújo, from the Department of History at Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto. His article, entitled *Beyond modern self-consciousness: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's historiography*, traces the development of Gumbrecht's theory of modernity and its consequences for the writing of history and for disciplinary self-consciousness. The author proposes a rereading of the "history of history" through two types of cultures discussed by Gumbrecht, namely "cultures of meaning" and "cultures of presence", and the article advocates that even though modern historiography can be characterized as predominantly anchored on the production of meaning, central aspects of its history can only be explained through elements that are typical of the production of presence.

Private life and interdisciplinarity: two examples in Contrasts of contemporary intimacy, is the fifth article in this issue. Author Marcos Silva, professor of History at Universidade de São Paulo, discusses two essays by social scientists on Brazilian private lives during the twentieth century. He analyzes the concepts of historical time and interdisciplinarity, and points out advancements and limitations in the exchange between the Social Sciences and Historical Knowledge.

The sixth article is by another professor from the Department of History at Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto. Sérgio da Mata's *Heinrich Rickert and the (axio)logical foundation of historical knowledge* presents Heinrich Rickert as one of the most prestigious names in neo-Kantian philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century, despite the fact that his greatest contribution towards conferring a logical foundation on general *Kulturwissenschaften*, and especially on historical science, has been widely forgotten. Lately, because of the discussion around the "end" of epistemology and the apparent triumph of postmodern solipsism, the author finds it appropriate to turn back to Rickert and reestablish a dialogue with his work.

Astor Diehl, historian and professor at Universidade de Passo Fundo - RS, is the author of *Historiographic theory: a dialogue between tradition and innovation*, which departs from the dialogue between historiographic tradition and the innovations that affect today's historical studies in order to discuss a few study perspectives in the field of theory of history. The text has a two-fold structure: the first involves the possibility of manifesting desires and subjectivities in the theoretical and historiographic dimension, while the second discusses such innovation, understood from the point of view of "historiographic culture" and of the plausibility of historical knowledge.

The eighth piece, *On the writing of history*, is by Luis Costa Lima, who has written extensively on the complex relations between history and literature. He maintains that what is peculiar to the writing of history can only be grasped through a comparison to a discourse that, since the times of ancient Greece, is its 'neighbor': literary discourse. One cannot understand the narratives of Herodotus and Thucydides except in the context of Homer's epic, and yet they are part of distinct discursive fields because the axes that inform them are also distinct. This kind of understanding was and is made difficult by the theoretical need surrounding the texts, and the modern conception of history perpetuated the same epistemological shortcoming detected in ancient times. The article featured here proves that if the old distinction between *res facta* and *res ficta* is not accompanied by epistemological questionings, it does not allow for a sufficient understanding of its approximations and differences. History and literature are discourses that are distinct from one another, but this is not due to the fact that one speaks the truth and the other is fictitious. Both are affected by the lack of theoretical constructions that follows the study of these discourses in the West.

Finally, closing this series of studies on the history of history, Unicamp professor Edgar Decca's *Identity metaphors in Roots of Brazil: decipher me or I will devour you* analyzes the use of metaphors in Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's *Raízes do Brasil*. Decca's article sees these metaphors not only as a literary device, but also as historical projections of far-reaching effects for the development of national identity. Metaphors, thus, should be considered a key to the understanding of a theory of the history of Brazil, which Sérgio Buarque de Holanda tried to develop so as to account for the historical process of the formation of Brazilian society. The book's title itself points to the far-reaching projections of such metaphors: as he speaks of "roots", "adventure", "exile", "sowing", "boundaries", "borders" and of "cordiality", Holanda makes us understand the meaning of our history and of our misfortunes.

As editors of the current issue, we wish to express our deep gratitude to the writers for their valuable collaboration. *Varia Historia*, once again, and

proudly, presents the community of Brazilian historians with an important contribution.

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