

INVITED EDITORS' NOTE

Dear Readers,

In a well-known painting by Henry Chamberlain, *Escravos doentes* (Sick slaves; 1819-1820), we see a line of slaves in Rio de Janeiro standing before a potential buyer, or owner. Scenes of sick slaves being sold at Valongo market or of Africans providing health treatment to slaves and freedmen on the streets were also motifs of Debret, Rugendas, Ender, and other travelers and painters who produced engravings and other iconographic representations of nineteenth-century Brazil. Now and then narratives were likewise produced about the health system and therapeutic practices associated with slavery. Evidence can be found in accounts like *Escravidão entre a costa d'África e o Brasil* (Slavery between the coast of Africa and Brazil), by Luís Antônio de Oliveira Mendes, or *Erário mineral* (Brazil's mineral treasure) by Luís Gomes Ferreira, among many other writings that speak to the hardships faced by Africans, including high mortality. Images, accounts, medical theses, apothecary records, newspaper ads, and hospital admission and discharge records afford us distinct pictures of the manifold aspects of slave health in Brazil, including discourses on customs and living conditions, the diseases from which they suffered, beliefs and treatments, funeral rites, and so on.

In Brazil, a new field of studies on health and slavery has been emerging quite recently, bringing together a variety of analyses, issues, theoretical models, sources, and methodological approaches. Although the topic of slavery has flourished in recent decades, yielding an array of studies and original methodologies, we still know little about how slaves lived and what their clothing and eating conditions and their diseases, therapeutic practices, and assistance systems were like. Starting with pioneering approaches in the 1980s, scholarship on the topic has abounded in the form of theses, dissertations, collections, articles, and books, with historians and other social scientists traveling the streets and alleys of the cities of slavery and visiting ports of disembarkation, tenements, 'zungus' (as urban slave housing was called) and plantation 'senzalas' (slave quarters), all in order to shed light on diseases, epidemics, deaths, healing arts, physicians, surgeons, sorcerers, midwives, herbs, household remedies, and unguents. How did slaves and freedmen, African and 'crioulo' (born in Brazil), live, grow sick, get healed, or die in Brazil? How did plantation owners, doctors, travelers, naturalists, and politicians – not to mention the slaves and freedmen themselves – view health systems and disease?

This special edition of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* on 'Health and Slavery' offers a sampling of recent scholarship on the topic. The studies by Brazilian and foreign authors presented in these pages are the results of different stages of research, and they indicate pathways and possibilities open to specialists, neophytes, or the inquisitive who are interested in delving into this fascinating territory of historiography. Historians of slavery and of health explore the topic from different theoretical and methodological approaches, using both original and known sources but re-interpreting from new angles.

This supplement of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* begins with a study by Sílvia Capanema on healthcare assistance in the Brazilian Navy immediately after abolition, that is, the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth. We learn how issues related to sailors' bodies, labor relations, and food were linked to morality, health, and discipline.

The next three studies are the product of a research project funded by the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (Sephis).¹ They address aspects of the health of Africans in their places of origin and in the Diaspora, crossing the shores of the Atlantic between Benin, the Caribbean, and Brazil. Elisée Soumonni explores the concepts of disease and health in former Dahomey. Smallpox epidemics and debates over the health system, African religiosity, and associated beliefs influenced vaccination campaigns and the meanings attributed to French colonization. On the other side of the Atlantic, in the British Caribbean, processes and expectations were similar. Rita Pemberton's article centers on debates over disease, social control, and public health services during the cholera epidemic in the 1850s in the context of the post-abolition Caribbean. Epidemics and mortality are also the topics of the article by Kaori Kodama, Tânia Pimenta, Francisco Bastos, and Jaime Bellido, who analyze the sociodemographic profile of death records from the 1855 cholera epidemic in Rio de Janeiro. The demographic approach is also found in Flávio Gomes' study, which analyzes the methodological possibilities of using parish records to capture patterns of age, occupation, kinship, disease, gender, and price. The author shows the workings of the system of identification and classification of Africans in the slave trade to Rio de Janeiro from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

Next we have a set of articles on illnesses and therapeutic practices. Focusing on tetanus, a disease that hit slaves hard, Ian Read draws rich correlations between the exponential growth of the Brazilian population at the close of the nineteenth century and the decline of cases of this illness. Two very interesting studies feature documentation from Santa Casa de Misericórdia hospitals: Beatriz Loner, Lorena Gill, and Micaele Scheer examine the diseases that struck slaves, especially those who worked in the dried-meat processing plants in the region of Pelotas, state of Rio Grande do Sul, and connects patterns of diseases, economic typologies, and labor relations. Márcio Couto Henrique investigates the experience of confining slaves to the Tucunduba Leprosarium in Pará and their strategies for coping with the segregationist policy to which they were subjected.

Diseases are also analyzed using the narratives of those responsible for treating or understanding them. André Nogueira analyzes the circulation of ideas and images of the diseases of slaves through physicians' and surgeons' discourse, including eighteenth-century treatises. He investigates the system for classifying diseases and the explanations of their causes in different colonial universes, highlighting the texts of royal surgeons Dazille and Vieira de Carvalho, the former translated into Portuguese by the latter. Karoline Carula shows how the discourse of physicians as well as the dialogues with readers and interested parties that appeared in newspapers linked slavery and motherhood so as to condemn the use of slave wet nurses by the owner class. Motherhood, home, disease, and nation

¹ See <http://www.sephis.org/>

intertwined and fueled debates and daily clashes. Rosilene Farias describes the black population's choices among treatment types, which differed from those proposed by academic medicine. Her article draws attention to the work of folk healers and physicians and to different perceptions of disease and cure during the 1856 cholera epidemic in Recife. An article by Eduardo Schnoor examines other ways of naming diseases and causes of death. Analyzing the first decades following abolition in the Ilha Grande region, in southern Rio de Janeiro state, he reveals the illnesses that affected ex-slaves and their descendants and how they were identified in civil records.

The last article in the issue deals neither with disease nor with mortality but offers an invaluable panorama of the bibliography on 'quilombos'. Manolo Florentino and Márcia Amantino discuss a possible morphology of the phenomenon of communities of runaway slaves on a hemispheric dimension and shows how the historiography on quilombos is being brought up to date thanks to valuable archive research and publications on the topic that are gradually undermining culturalist and Marxist approaches to 'palenques', 'cumbes', and 'quilombos'. Narrowing the scale of analysis, some authors study women 'quilombolas' in particular, kinship systems within communities of runaways, the demographics of these groups, and issues related to their identities.

In short, what we present to our readers in this issue is the result of an initial collective effort to collate research devoted to health and slavery in Brazil and other countries. We hope this special issue will incite many new studies. Happy reading!

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