

EDITOR'S NOTE

History and changes in scientific publishing: resistance or adaptation?

It was with great pleasure that our journal celebrated its 25th anniversary on June 26-28, 2019, at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz here in Rio de Janeiro, where we held a commemorative workshop entitled “The Present and Future of History Publications,” focused on issues related to scientific publishing in the field of history. The workshop was the culmination of a number of academic events that we at *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* have organized over the past few years as a form of self-examination. Science editors from Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and places around Brazil joined us to discuss various facets of publishing, particularly the profound changes occasioned by such proposals as preprinting and open science, changes that have had the effect of resignifying the roles of editors and journals as “brokers” of knowledge.

These innovations have usually been framed to fit the natural and exact sciences, which have their own distinct rhythms, profiles, and requirements in the realms of knowledge production, circulation, and dissemination. Meanwhile, the social and human sciences are left to either embrace or resist these changes. Resistance is generally founded on the argument that the social and human sciences follow different patterns than the natural sciences, meaning that the proposed (or sometimes prescribed) innovations are not applicable in their cases. The workshop made clear the need to reject such dichotomous thinking. Instead, historians and other scholars of the humanities must gain a better grasp of the suggested changes and analyze them critically so they can judge their pertinence to their own fields. If the unique features of any given area should not be automatically flagged as reasons for resisting transformations in how knowledge is disseminated, the debate must still take these features into account. In addition to recognizing differences between fields of knowledge, we should also recognize that each journal has an individual identity, reflecting its audience and its institutional, geographic, and cognitive contexts. Recognizing this diversity is essential to fostering the full spectrum of scientific activity.

Our celebration of the silver anniversary of *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* evinced the journal's role in shaping what was only an incipient field of knowledge in many Latin American countries twenty-five years ago. At that time, except for the *Revista Brasileira de História da Ciência*, founded in 1985, Brazil had no solid publication that primarily featured studies exploring the history of the biomedical sciences and public health. Today we can

confidently affirm that this has become a thriving field, occupied by scholars from different backgrounds and especially by historians. In contrast with the moment when our journal was born, historians at Brazilian and other Latin American institutions are now devoted to analyzing health and disease from a historical perspective. Professionals working in health and the biomedical sciences used to produce their own historical work about their fields as they endeavored to understand and legitimize their practices, interventions, and identities. Although this still happens, there is a new way of viewing the transdisciplinary nature of the history of science and health, one that, we believe, our journal has helped generate: transdisciplinarity understood as a mechanism for advancing knowledge through the cross-pollination of approaches, perspectives, and topics. It is by engaging with other fields that history can, for example, influence public policy debate, an idea heavily defended by historians of public health and medicine. Our broad, rich exchanges with other fields – especially science communication and the preservation and management of cultural heritage in science and health, the bailiwick of our journal – have benefitted from the institutional environment to which we belong.

Over the course of its twenty-five years of uninterrupted circulation, *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* has established itself nationally and internationally as a journal that encourages dialogue between history – its “backbone,” as former editor Jaime Benchimol likes to say – and various other fields. Like most international journals in the area of history, which focus on specific topics within historiography, such as economic, demographic, environmental, women’s, or labor history or the history of particular regions, like Europe, Southeast Asia, or Latin America, *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* specializes in the history of medicine, public health, and the life sciences. In this sense, our journal differs from most of Brazil’s prestigious history journals, which have a more generalist profile, owing to their emergence largely as part of graduate programs seeking to create a channel for their scholarship.

These journals matured as the area grew more professionalized, in step with the professionalization of publishing practices, the complexification of history, and the implementation of evaluation policies by funding agencies, which then engendered the demonization of endogeny. The result of these trenchant criticisms and calls for internationalization has been dubious at best, as pointed out during the workshop by Julio Pimentel Pinto, current editor of *Revista de História*, a publication of the University of São Paulo (<http://www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br/editores-de-periodicos-de-historia-encaram-novos-desafios/>).

The workshop also brought to the fore the need to expand forums of collective discussion where editors of history journals can debate transformations in scientific publishing. For a long time, historians were uncomfortable about viewing their work as scientific, but they are now regularly invited – not only as editors but also as authors, readers, and peer-reviewers – to address complex issues as part of discussions most often led by scholars of the natural sciences. This engagement is crucial if new editorial practices are to attend to the particular needs of history, which, for example, puts less priority on the speed at which findings are released. The content of historical articles is (or should be) the product of document research, protracted analysis, and arguments grounded in an active exchange with historiography. It is not so clear what constitutes the kind of

“research data” potentially publishable in open access format. The average lifespan for the citation of a history article is not as brief as in other fields. As shown by Pablo Yankelevich, editor of the longstanding journal *Historia Mexicana*, articles published fifty years ago still rank among the most accessed and cited. In summary, we must further develop our ideas about the specificities of each field and how to account for them in new publishing practices, so editors of history journals can critically analyze any changes they intend to adopt. History periodicals are not obstacles to the swift dissemination of knowledge but are rather responsible for the quality of their published content and for compliance with ethical parameters, while they also offer ways of leveraging training, development, and innovation – practices enforced by *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* since its inception. We are pleased our commemoration of these 25 years promoted and deepened discussions about science publications among historians.

Our journal is moving forward on slightly new footing. In our editor’s note in the first issue of 2019 (Silva, Cueto, 2019), we announced that change would be coming to our editorial team. Soon after Marcos Cueto and I became editors in January 2015, we established four-year terms for members of the editorial board in the belief that regular turnover will help ensure that the journal reflects the dynamic nature and diversity of this academic field. As we said in our earlier letter, Nelson Rodrigues Sanjad, Luiz Antônio de Castro Santos, and Karina Ramaciotti will continue as assistant editors. They will now be joined by Vanderlei Sebastião de Souza, professor at the State Universidade Estadual do Centro-Oeste (PR); Rafael Huertas, researcher with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain); Mariola Espinosa, professor at the University of Iowa (USA); Stefan Pohl-Valero, professor at the University of Rosario, in Bogotá, Colombia; and Carlos Henrique Assunção Paiva, researcher at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/Fiocruz. Ana Carolina Vimieiro-Gomes, professor at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, will retain her responsibility for the “Books & Networks” section for the next four years. The “Images” section will be handed off to Charles Monteiro, professor at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul. Luciane Quillet Heymann, researcher at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, and Rogério Rosa Rodrigues, professor at the Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina, will share oversight of “Sources”. “Science Communication” will be assigned to Marina Ramalho e Silva, researcher at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/Fiocruz’s Museum of Life.

Under the new terms, Marcos will continue on as science editor for four more years, while I will begin serving as an assistant editor. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to everyone who took part in these four years of rich learning experiences. I extend special thanks to my partner on this journey, Marcos Cueto; to our executive editor, Roberta Cardoso Cerqueira; to the entire *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* team, which includes Mônica Auler, Mônica Cruz Caminha, Camilo Papi, Vinícius Renaud, and Marciel Mendonça Rosa; and also to the journalists Marina Lemle and Vivian Mannheimer, all of whom generously provided kind and thoughtful support. I am in complete agreement with Jaime Benchimol when he says the magnificent team at the journal today expresses better than anything else what *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* has achieved in professionalization and excellence. I would also like to thank the authors, readers, editors, and peer-reviewers who worked with me during this time,

as well as the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, especially its director, Paulo Elian, whose constant support has been fundamental.

I am certain *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos* will meet the profound challenges of this period, not by resting on its well-earned laurels but because Marcos and the team will recognize and embrace the tasks of ongoing adaptation, steady innovation, and firm diligence, guaranteeing that the journal remains a beacon of excellence for years to come.

REFERENCE

SILVA, André Felipe Cândido; CUETO, Marcos.
2019: a year of debates, projects, and gratitude. *História, Ciências, Saúde – Manguinhos*, v.26, n.1, p.9-10, 2019.

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