

### Impact, Social Relevance and Citation: New and Old Challenges for Historiography

*Impacto, relevância social e citação:  
novos e velhos desafios para a historiografia*

This issue marks the closure of another year of RBH. It also inaugurates the terms of this editor and the new Editorial Board. This is undoubtedly a great honor and responsibility for all involved. The challenge is greatly facilitated by the generous work of those who preceded us, especially by the diligence and competence of Bruno Feitler and the entire team of the journal. A new cycle starts, and we hope to meet the expectations.

In this term, the editor of RBH also takes on the role of coordinator of the Forum of editors of scientific journals of Anpuh-Brasil. We live in a moment of great uncertainty regarding the direction of the CAPES evaluation of Graduate Programs and its evaluation system of journals, Qualis. Since we took over the forum in August, we have maintained working groups to discuss and prepare proposals and diagnoses on urgent and relevant topics such as the increasing pressure from the use of standardized measurements as a factor in the evaluation of journals, the questions in the culture of citation of articles in our area, and the review of the policy that regulates co-authoring practices in scientific production. With the full support of the current board of Anpuh-Brasil we are organizing a service to support journal publishers that will soon be available on the website of our association.

In one of its first actions, the elected Editorial Board decided to create new editorial sections for RBH. Professor Wagner Geminiano was chosen to inaugurate the review section and is already actively working on the construction of actions that meet the demand of the field to strengthen this type of production. Professors Marcos Stein and Helena Papa will act as executive editors, sharing with me the responsibilities of monitoring the editorial flow. The increasing complexity and relevance of academic journals required such growth in the number of managers directly involved with the journal's production.

Another important – and already underway – change is the release of public calls to propose dossiers. The intent of the Editorial Board is to allow greater participation of the academic community when drafting proposals from a series of requirements outlined by the journal, such as the existence of a diversity policy (regional within Brazil, gender and ethnic-racial) clearly explained by the organizers. In our first call, focused on the area of Ancient History, the winning proposal is titled “A História Antiga entre o local e o global: integração, conflito e usos do passado” [Ancient History between the Local and Global: Integration, Conflict and Uses of the Past]. Its publication is expected for the second issue of 2020, and it will be the first dossier in this area to be published by RBH.

One of the biggest challenges we will face in this management is to increase the academic impact and the social relevance of articles published in RBH. The correct refusal of the History area to automatically adopt bibliometric indicators to assess the impact of journals should not mean a total refusal of these instruments, let alone the absence of a broad debate on the impact and relevance of the production published in journals. The lack of in-depth studies on this topic prevents definitive evaluations, we can certainly do much to broaden the national and international scope of our journals, as well as the circulation of this knowledge across several social spaces.

The critical adoption of bibliometric indicators may help us understand and scale the academic impact of production in journals, the profile of articles with greater reach, and the segmentation of the reader audience. The maintenance of a high-level academic journal is now a complex and exhausting task, requiring increasingly specialized work. The path between submitting a manuscript and its publication involves a long series of actions aimed at improving its academic value and ensuring the quality and integrity of what readers receive. Articles are indexed and deposited in repositories that ensure their survival, protecting them from fraud and tampering. In times of misinformation, academic journals are safe havens for accumulated scientific and social knowledge.

We must ask ourselves whether the same editorial chain applies to the collections of unpublished articles that have multiplied, competing with the journal system but rarely achieving its impact. With the creation of the so-called *Qualis Livros*, which allowed the valorization of this type of production, collections became more frequent but without the existence of a broad and integrated debate about their place in our matrix of scientific publications. Are the collections, lacking individual indexing of the chapters and without regular

audit about their editorial processes, contributing to the dispersion of an already dispersed academic production? Unfortunately, studies that could provide diagnoses of this and other problems are still rare in Brazilian historiography.<sup>1</sup> Pointing out these frailties does not imply in disqualifying collections, many of which stand out for their excellence, relevance and opportunity of the initiative.

To us, it does not seem risky to state that the centrality of the authorial book and the thesis in the field of history should not serve as an excuse for the neglect to the completeness and topicality of our bibliographies. We must ask ourselves whether the increasing availability of articles and studies has been accompanied by a greater commitment to the recovery and critical confrontation of this production in our work. As advisors and evaluators, would we be sufficiently attentive to such requirement of representation and bibliographic completeness so crucial to a good investigation? On the other hand, our articles and book chapters can also seek ways to frame themes and objects that, when moving away from the overly monographic reporting, may be more open to interdisciplinary dialogue and relevance. Finally, we must discuss the impact and social relevance of our studies, particularly at a time when authoritarian political forces work to weaken History and curtail the right to it.

On another front – not less important –, the relevance of journals should go through their ability to invest the scientific production stored on their pages in actions of public history, scientific dissemination, and curatorship of stories. Bringing the public closer to academic research requires initiatives that go through different media, transmitting their contents to other formats and audiences, involving, for example, actions aimed at producing content that can be used in primary education and by the various social movements and subjects. Articles can thus gain new lives in audio and video formats, in adapted narratives, and in commented and collaborative bibliographies, among other initiatives. Creating virtual portals associated with editorial projects is one of the possible pathways in this direction. Perhaps, student participation – at undergraduate and graduate levels – can gain a new and decisive dimension that could lead the graduate system to assign greater weight to this modality of intellectual production in its evaluation matrix, and the academic journals to have greater student participation in their teams.

In a semester in which we follow astonished the federal government handling the threats to the Amazon forest with misinformation and bad faith, and with the oil spill in Northeastern Brazil also being treated with neglect, rumors and lies, our last dossier of the year being dedicated to the Amazon Borders is

especially timely. Sidney Lobato – its organizer – gathered a representative, living and complex sample of historical research on such an urgent topic. As usual, in this issue the reader will also find articles in the open section which represent the editorial quality of our journal.

Have a good reading.

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Valdei Araujo

Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto (Ufop),  
Instituto de Ciências Sociais e Humanidades,  
Departamento de História, Mariana, MG, Brasil.  
rbh@anpuh.br <<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8913-2509>>

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## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> A great exception is the work of Rafael F. Benthien (2019). See also Fico, Wasserman & Magalhães (2018), and Ginzburg (2014).