

Foreword

We are facing a field of research in expansion. From the backdrop of Cultural History we can identify a series of themes, which are mixed with the specificities of the History of Science. From this fusion, we find the history of science and its cultural interfaces. In this number of *Varia História*, in the issue entitled ***History, Science, and Health: practices and knowledge***, we present some of the research indicating the analytical possibilities in the area.

The field Science and Culture in History, from the Graduate Program in History/UFGM, has two emphases: Social History of Science and History of Scientific Ideas. By establishing these two emphases in the structuring of the research, there is no intention to make them conform to the traditional dichotomy between an internal history of science and an external history of science. It is intended, through cultural mediation, to dissolve this dichotomy, changing the main point of the debate. Thus, the division of the studies between both complementary emphases reflects much more a methodological dimension than exactly an epistemological perspective.

The research in the Social History of Science analyzes the various existing relations between science and society. The difficulties between the production of scientific knowledge and society in its historic context are the object of this analysis. These investigations reflect the social construction of science through biographies, practices, institutions, procedures, discoveries, and ruptures.

The research in the History of Scientific Ideas comprehends, from cultural relations, the formation of the concepts and ideas, which characterize the scientific theories in their various contexts. In this sense, we are not taking ideas and scientific concepts by themselves, but trying to understand how cultural determinants play an important role in the formation of these ideas and concepts and in the elaboration of scientific theories.

The field of research: Science and Culture in History contains studies, which consider the formation and development of modern science, as well as, in particular, the emergence and development of the sciences in Brazil.

The present issue defined the history of health as its object of analysis and presents in its 5 articles a widely diversified spectrum of the production in the area.

María Silvia Di Liscia's article deals with the intercession between the medical practice and school, from the discussion on racial regeneration, at the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century in Argentina. Besides presenting an interface with the history of education, the article provides incentives for comparative analyses between Brazil and Argentina.

Vera Marques Beltrão's article investigates a field of analysis little explored: the handbooks aimed at spreading scientific information, specifically in the health area, in the 18th century. The interface with the history of education and the circulation of knowledge is here under discussion again, as there is an appropriation of academic knowledge by the portion of the population distant from the privileged spaces of the formation of knowledge.

Then, Flávio Coelho Edler's text investigates the formation of concepts in the history of health, specially the sociology of a discovery, with ancylostomiasis under discussion. The author's material for analysis consists of the publications and debates in the medical area presented to the members of the Imperial Academy of Medicine and in the journal *Gazeta Médica da Bahia*. The investigation proposed by Edler allows us to conjecture a promising field of analysis, which is still not very much explored in Brazil.

Yonissa Marmitt Wadi's article, on the other hand, in a special way, discusses the field of psychiatry retreating from the tradition of institutional histories upon privileging the paradoxes of living in a psychiatric institution. The medical discourses and practices are approached as they emerge not through medical writing (treaties, reports, compendiums, prescriptions), but through the writings of a patient, who used Pierina Cechini as her pseudonym. The course that Yonissa Wadi presents us is at the same time fascinating and impressive as she mixes a personal account, touching upon the theme of mental institutions and their social repercussions.

To close this issue, there is Henrique Carneiro's article "Sacred plants in the history of America." In this article, the author investigates sacred plants from the indigenous traditions from different regions of the Americas.

Institutional history, construction of concepts in the health area, and medical practices are some of the themes we present in this issue. As a field under construction, new issues should soon be presented with themes involving the circulation of knowledge, history of diseases and conceptions of body and health. We look forward to your cooperation,

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