

EDITOR'S NOTE

This collection of articles is product of an initiative in scientific collaboration between Brazil and Portugal through the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation's Casa de Oswaldo Cruz and the University of Lisbon's Institute of Social Sciences. While these two bodies have quite similar structures and objectives within the field of research and graduate teaching, they pursue differing yet complementary scientific and disciplinary agendas. The Casa de Oswaldo Cruz focuses on the history and the preservation of the memory of the sciences and health in Brazil whereas the Institute of Social Sciences brings together more diversified fields of study and projects that are independent of each other. It was our common interest in the social and ethnographic history of medical practices that prompted us to undertake the bi-institutional project "Medical knowledge and therapeutic practices within the realms of Portuguese colonization." The initial team comprised Luiz Otávio Ferreira, Fernando Sergio Dumas dos Santos, Luiz Antônio Teixeira, and Tania Maria Fernandes, from the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, and Cristiana Bastos, Ricardo Roque, Mónica Saavedra, and Maria Manuel Quintela, from the Institute of Social Sciences. With the support of both institutions as well as of Brazil's National Council on Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and Portugal's Foundation for Science and Technology and its Institute for International Scientific and Technical Cooperation (now called the Office for International Relations in Science and Higher Education, or GRICES), we were able to carry out a number of missions under this agreement and have already presented preliminary versions of some of the present articles at seminars held in Lisbon (2001) and in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro (2002). New researchers have joined the original group, and we feel certain the results published in this issue will serve as an example for further collaboration projects, comparative analyses, and joint discussions of results.

At this time, we offer you some explorations into the history of medical practices and knowledge that approach from different empirical angles but share a common concern: the study of moments of transition. Such moments always involve disputes and the adoption or rejection of certain knowledge — be this knowledge the introduction of the bacteriological paradigm, institutionalization of medical teaching, or generalization of the smallpox vaccine. These articles show us how replacing or substituting one practice for another is neither a simple nor a tranquil process, whereby one method must yield to the progress of knowledge. All such transition processes imply complex political-social scenarios that tell us much about the societies wherein they occur and about the very nature of the changes taking place within medical knowledge and within power relations.

The first section of this issue provides three different glimpses into the heart of such processes. In her investigation of the daily workings of the Health Service in nineteenth-century Portuguese colonial India, Cristiana Bastos criticizes the heroic narrative that twentieth-century national-colonist ideology applied to the Goa Medical School. The author depicts a reality made up of weaknesses and negotiations, and a society marked by contradictory scenarios — a picture that challenges the classic portrayal of colonial domination. Luiz Antonio Teixeira, in his research into the discussions surrounding the malarial or typhoid character of the so-called *febres paulistas*, provides us with a veritable thriller on the micro-political processes that arose when academies and groups of influence formed their consensuses

during a crucial moment in the history of medicine, that is, during introduction of the bacteriological paradigm. Lastly, Tânia Salgado Pimenta shows how the institution known as the *Fisicatura-mor* dealt with the diversity of curing approaches and varied understandings of disease then in place.

The second section delves into the dissemination of scientific medical knowledge in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries within specific social and political contexts. Luiz Otavio Ferreira's study of the Brazilian medical press during the first half of the eighteenth century reveals the close relations between business, political, and scientific interests that helped enable the institutionalization of medical periodicals. In his look at the curious case of the Arco Cego's vast editorial production in Lisbon and its diffusion within Brazil, Robert Wegner discusses metropolis-colony relations and the narrative of civilization's conquest of rural spaces. Lorelay Kury takes us deep into the transition from the mere collection of natural species to their domestication into systems of knowledge.

The third section demonstrates how history as inspired by the anthropology and sociology of knowledge opens the doors to topics apparently closed off by the conventional history of medicine, as was the case with smallpox. Examining statements by the Imperial Academy of Medicine in Brazil regarding smallpox vaccination and the disease itself, Tania Maria Fernandes points to the contradictions and weaknesses displayed by medical knowledge at the time of its institutional consolidation. In Portuguese colonial India, Mónica Saavedra shows us the subtle shadings found within an apparent dichotomy between the native choice for variolization and imposition of the vaccine by the Empire's sanitation authorities. Ricardo Roque develops a profound sociological analysis of scientific knowledge as he examines an apparent *fait divers* relegated to oblivion in the history of the fight against smallpox: the Goa treatment of this disease "translated" from an indigenous practice.

The articles appearing in the fourth and final section focus on practices defined in opposition or contrast to the way in which medical knowledge was being consolidated in the center. For Timothy Walker, we cannot study the Portuguese Inquisition's seventeenth-century persecution of *curandeiros* without taking into account the growing power of physicians, who saw the former as competitors. In a comparative study of Portugal and Brazil, Maria Manuel Quintela explores thermalism as a therapeutic practice caught between marginality, on the one hand, and scientification by clinical medicine and surrounding disciplines (such as hydrogeology), on the other.

What we offer here is just the start of a promising road, one that will allow us to broaden our horizons through comparative and cross studies, through dialogue, and through agreement or disagreement in the fields of the social and health sciences. We hope we may reach our goals and watch such endeavors multiply.

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Guest Editors