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From the Editors

The Historiography of Science as a Specific Field of Research

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It is with great pleasure that we arrived at our fourth edition. The task of editing *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science* has been extremely enjoyable not only because of the subject but also because of the great acceptance we have had from both authors and referees as well as from readers. In these four issues, this still very young journal has published authors from around 20 different countries and our page has been accessed in about 50 countries. Of course, this welcome is a great encouragement to continue this dialogue with all those interested in the historiography of science around the world.

In creating a specific journal to discuss the historiography of science, our purpose is not only to emphasize the relevance or importance that this subject has been gaining from the great development of the history of science in the last decades everywhere in the world, but also to emphasize the importance of the constitution of the historiography of science as a field of research that has its own specificity.

As we know, concomitantly with the intense research activity in the history of science, a wide range of theoretical, methodological and epistemological questions about this historiographic production emerges. The critical analysis of the historiography of science that our journal seeks to accomplish not only responds to this demand, but it helps to delimit the contours of a specific field of investigation – both in its theoretical and epistemological viewpoints as well as methodological and historiographic aspects. In other words, even if the historiography of science is a sub-discipline of the history of science, by means of its theoretical and methodological analysis, it determines its own research object.

Naturally, the historiography of science is nourished by the contributions of many disciplines that deal transversely with sciences, such as history, philosophy, sociology, etc., as well as other scientific disciplines such as physics, medicine, biology, etc. Thus, we can find in different fields of knowledge authors such as Koyré (Philosophy), Kuhn (Physics), Fleck (Medicine), Merton (Sociology), Butterfield (History), for example, who took sciences as an object of study from the point of view of their fields – scientific, historical, philosophical, sociological, etc. – but brought original contributions to the historiography of science.

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Therefore, although the focus of these authors was not initially to produce historiographic models, starting from their fields to make an approach to sciences, they ended up teaching us “how” we could realize transversal approaches of the sciences. This means that they went far beyond their initial expectations by building historiographic models that applied theoretically and methodologically in building the history of many other scientific disciplines. In fact, rather than elucidating the history of a particular science, the most innovative contributions of these authors were theoretical and methodological, and they belong in some way much more to the historiography of science than to their fields of origin.

Affirming this line of approach, *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science* seeks to deepen the historiographic studies of science by circumscribing and legitimizing its field of action as a specific knowledge, albeit as a sub-discipline of the history of science. In fact, in receiving contributions from the various disciplines that adopted science as an object, historiography reworked these influences and contributions in a specific *locus* of theoretical and methodological reflection. Reciprocally, this reflection made by the historiography of science is an important tool for all disciplines that approach science transversely. In this sense, seeking to maintain this space of critical reflection on the historiography of science is certain to participate in an improvement of the history of science and of the other disciplines that take science as an object of analysis, such as the sociology of science, philosophy of science, scientific education, anthropology of science, scientific journalism, etc.

Following this guidance, in this issue, we present the Georges Canguilhem dossier. Focusing on medicine, biology, history, and philosophy, Canguilhem’s work is a true example of what we have aforementioned, inasmuch as, rather than addressing the history of life sciences, Canguilhem teaches us a peculiar way of approaching such disciplines by performing, thus, a theoretical and methodological work. In short, a historiographic work of great value.

Last but not least, we must express our great thanks to Professor Fábio Ferreira de Almeida for organizing the dossier we are presenting. Without the expertise, competence and zeal of Professor Ferreira de Almeida, this dossier would not have existed.