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## From the Editor

### Women in the History of Science

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The importance of women's contribution to science and technology is far greater than what has traditionally been recorded in the history of science. These last few decades female participation in the production of scientific knowledge has increased, and as a consequence, the history of science has enhanced its focus on the role of women in science. Although these new approaches are only in the beginning, the narratives concerning women's history in science have highlighted not only their extraordinary participation in the production of scientific knowledge, but have also revealed much of what has been hidden by a patriarchal society that has dramatically hampered women's integration into scientific activity.

A historiographical reflection on the history of women in science, as a “transversal” reading, is something that aims to participate in this process of understanding the role and integration of women in science. Therefore, rather than addressing this history of women in science, it is necessary to have possibilities and reflect on such historical accounts. That is to say, rather than producing the narratives of female participation in science and technology – a crucial task in itself – we need to analyze them from this “transversal” perspective. By putting forward this special issue, this “transversal” perspective was the objective of our editors. The inspiration was to seek answers to questions such as: 1) does the historiography of women in science already adequately track the production of scientific and technological knowledge by women?; 2) are there differences of a historical narrative about women in the sciences produced by women themselves?; and 3) what is the role of men in this endeavor? Perhaps, it is only between the lines that this special issue is able to answer such complex questions as these, but certainly, these are open-ended questions about which, in a broader sense, we have just begun to perceive, feel, and understand. Special issues such as this can provide valuable aid in this process of study.

We need more clarity and discussions about the course we need to take to deepen this vital issue of women in science. Perhaps, I am much more guided by the idea that it is necessary to do something than accurately know what to do. I have been marked by this problem more by personal experience than by historical analysis. My daughter and son have chosen to pursue careers in technology (Engineering) and science (Physics). At the beginning of their undergraduate studies, I set out to provide them with some questions about women's participation in science and technology. At that time, they had no clear position as

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to whether or not there was a real difference in the treatment of girls and boys pursuing a scientific or technological career. Years later, at the end of their studies, they had informed opinions and a deeper awareness of the subject as well as identified some significant differences, if not stronger in the formation, indeed in the reception given by society to women scientists or engineers. Needless to say, my daughter's position on these disparities was far more compelling. Even when perceiving the effort made by the university to reduce such differences, it is clear that we live in a society that is deeply marked by its patriarchal roots that still affect women in many ways. This is notably when women exercise specific tasks and duties, including those in science and technology.

Although there have been many changes in Western culture, this restriction imposed on women still persists, which causes me a great deal of discomfort. I feel that, in order to change this picture definitively, among the many actions and changes in attitudes, it is also necessary to think of a pedagogy that helps us, men and boys, to enter into this new context with more clarification as to what our role is in society.

I hope that women and men in the near future, all over the world (even knowing that this future reaches different places at very different times) can coexist equally in social life, the world of work, and particularly when cooperating on the production of scientific and technological knowledge. I also hope that this segregation of women in the science will soon be a sad and distant memory, so that it can always serve as a warning to all on the path that guides us into the future.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Andrea Reichenberger (Paderborn University) and Moema Vergara (Mast – Rio) for accepting to lead the organization on the dossier *Women in Sciences: Historiography of Science and History of Science – On the Work of Women in Sciences and Philosophy*. Without their expertise, competence, and zeal, this dossier would not have existed.