

# Editorial

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## Editorial

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After almost ten years as Editor-in-chief the time has come for a change, and I am happy to announce that *Gesnerus* will continue its voyage with Vincent Barras at the helm.

In a short retrospect on the decade of this Editorial Board's activities one feels obliged or at least tempted to point out some achievements made. In quantitative terms it may be of interest that more than 115 manuscripts went through all stages of the editorial process and have seen the light of the day as articles in printed form. In addition, over 500 book reviews have appeared, reflecting the Editors' conviction of their importance, both for the scholar's information as for every reader's stimulation. The Editorial Board has also selected three scholarly monographs which have been printed in book form in the series *Gesnerus Supplementa*. Within the same series the *Gesnerus Index* has appeared which leads the way to articles, keywords, and book reviews contained in the first 50 volumes and which the distinguished journal *Medical History* epitomised as "Clearly laid out, with a good system of cross-references, it is an invaluable guide to an invaluable journal".

As the official publication of the *Swiss Society for the History of Medicine and Sciences*, *Gesnerus* was originally a national journal. Now it has, in fact, become an international one: in the past decade the percentage of articles from outside Switzerland has increased from 40% to well over 50%, with authors from Germany, the US and UK, Italy, France and other countries.

Finally, a new publisher has been found in 1995. A publisher and printer with a long history, Schwabe & Co. in Basel is rooted both in history and medicine and has become an ideal partner for *Gesnerus*. It may be a rare case in the history of business that *Gesnerus* is treated by its new publisher not as an object but rather with the love given to a new child in a family.

Last but not least, the Editors may consider as an achievement the mere survival of *Gesnerus* in view of constant financial restrictions, rising costs, and an insufficient number of subscribers. In a former editorial we can read: "The editorial board is determined to find ways and means to make ends meet and to secure the survival of *Gesnerus* without making detrimental compromises." If we do have succeeded herein, we can only hope to have reached the most important goal, namely to have maintained and improved scholarly

quality and international standing, to have mirrored the major fields of interest in their variety, and to have shown openness to new approaches. To find our publications cited by authors in good journals and books is a particular reward.

For these achievements I have to thank very sincerely

- my colleagues of the Editorial Board for providing ideas and constant help and encouragement,
- our referees who keep up the vital process of quality control through peer-review,
- our authors of published articles and book reviews for their important and highly appreciated contributions,
- our new publisher, represented by Drs U. Breitenstein and U. Dill, for their indefatigable interest, help, and cooperation,
- the Swiss Academy of Sciences for vital financial support,
- the *Swiss Society for the History of Medicine and Sciences* for support, interest, and encouragement, and last but not least,
- our readers for what we interpret as “acknowledgement by silence”.

An editorial in another journal devoted to the history of medicine once encouraged its readers to “tell us if you think the journal is doing well. Do not enjoy or grumble in private.”

From January 2002 on Vincent Barras will be the new Editor-in-chief of *Gesnerus*. He is professor at the University of Lausanne and appointed director of the Romand Institute for the History and Medicine and Health of the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne, and he has been a member of the Editorial Board for over ten years. Many of his scholarly publications are dealing with the history of medicine in the Antiquity and in the 18th century, the history of anatomy, psychiatry, and forensic medicine as well as with philosophy and ethics of medicine. This broad spectrum of expertise reflects Barras’ background which is rooted not only in medicine and the history and philosophy of sciences, but also in linguistics and foreign languages to which you may add activities in music and literature. Welcome, Vincent, and my sincerest wishes for your job!

Marcel H. Bickel