

Editorial

In this issue *Medicina Historica* presents a thought-provoking overview that spans centuries and borders, bringing to light little-known aspects of the history of medicine and medical practice.

It opens with Cesare Magati (1579-1647), a 17th century doctor who challenged Galenic dogma and introduced innovations in the treatment of wounds, a revolutionary personality whose comparison with Flaminio Rota (1555-1611) highlights a generational clash and calls into question the traditional teacher-student relationship.

From the 17th century we move to the court of Christina of Sweden, where Cesare Macchiati (1629-1675) demonstrates how the role of the court doctor can be a springboard for professional success, paving the way for a certainly modern approach, namely the international comparison between practitioners of medicine.

Again, with an international approach, the figure of Carlo Gandini, from the 18th century, is presented through the practice of distilling human heads in order to obtain an elixir prescribed to cure encephalic diseases.

Another interesting theme is that of self-experimentation by doctors, a practice that has been the subject of various debates, including ethical ones, which we have witnessed since the 18th century. The authors present several cases with the aim of understanding how the purpose of self-experimentation has changed with the development of medical knowledge.

From here, research moves towards the 20th century with the discovery of IL-1 which paved the way for studies on mediators of immune and inflammatory responses.

Our exploration continues with a historical review of syphilis and medical responses to it, highlighting how our approach to the disease has changed over the centuries.

In the contribution presented in this publication the authors elaborate a review of syphilis and the medical community's responses to the disease, from the colonial period to the availability of penicillin in the 20th century. They do this through a systematic analysis of bioarchaeological sites, demonstrating how the study of ancient osteological finds can contribute to acquiring significant information on syphilis as well as other diseases of the past.

In the study of human remains it is very important to also evaluate many other aspects that interact during the decomposition process and which can compromise the study and the conservative state of the finds. In this regard, the study of invertebrate remains recovered during an inspection of the preserved remains of Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi in Florence, Italy, illustrates how entomological research can truly help researchers understand the conservative state of human remains. In this study the results showed that an ongoing infestation affected the precious relic and that conservative treatment was necessary for both religious and curatorial purposes.

Still on the topic of bioarchaeology, the study of plague can certainly gain a lot from the study of ancient human remains. The letter presented on the historical identification of a lazaret in the province of Milan intends to arouse interest in the paleopathological study in these places. Tracing the plague germ on human remains found in contexts reported as lazarets can only enrich our knowledge regarding the spread of the plague, in this case the Manzonian plague.

On an ethical level, the recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights condemning Italy for a case of abuse of the support administration offers an opportunity for reflection on the interpretation and application of this legal measure which has significant ethical implications.

With this issue our Journal pursues its mission to increase international comparison in the field of *medical humanities* and in particular in such specific sectors as the history of medicine, paleopathology and bioethics which for a long time have suffered from restricted sharing confined within their individual countries. There is still a lot to do...but we are on the right path.

Marta Licata
Editor in Chief